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PREFACE

THIS book will take you to many parts of the world in search of adventure. You will meet the work of some of our greatest writers and be introduced to episodes which will fill you with excitement, admiration, and amusement, for humour has not been forgotten. You will not always be travelling in the same direction, for your flight with Richard Halliburton is from west to east, whereas your plodding journey with Peter Fleming is part of his travels from Peking to Kashmir. Your journey begins and ends in the British Isles.

The exercises at the back are suggestions which may help you to get more from your authors than mere entertainment. You have every right to demand to be entertained, but your pleasure may become even greater if you are helped to a fuller understanding of what you are reading. Some of the lessons you learn from getting into the minds of great writers may lead you to something more than a wish to write; you may see the joy it is to have the power of saying just what you want to say, knowing full well that people will want to hear you say it. This cannot be achieved by mere imitation, but an insight into the writer's art may lead to the development of your own concealed and unsuspected powers.

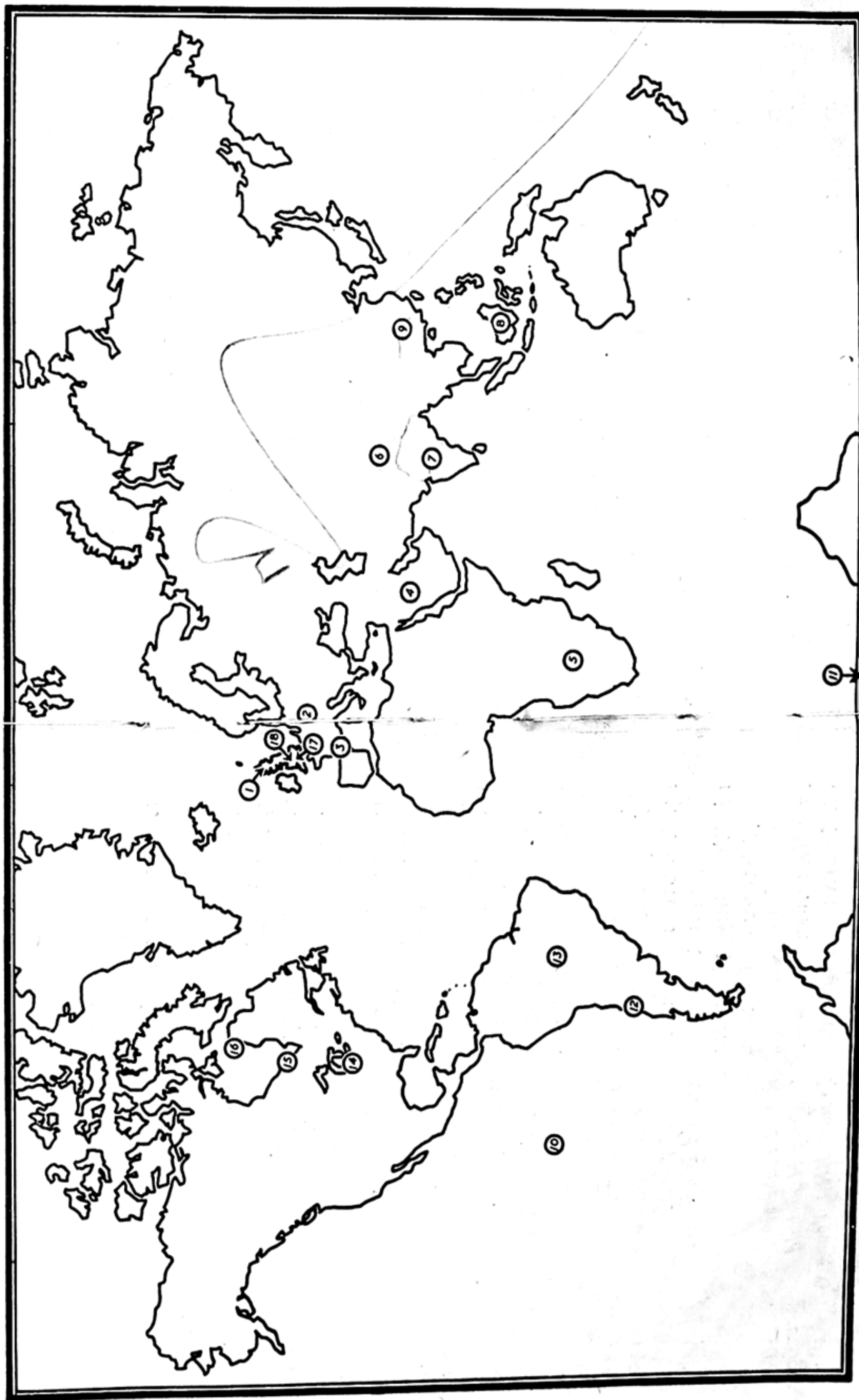
You may find the book useful in stirring the thoughts already awakened by talks and lessons. It is true that you may see scenes like these when you visit the cinema, but then you are in a receptive mood and cannot recall

everything you see. In reading you may go at your own pace, make your own pauses to reread those parts which have given you the greatest pleasure, make your own comparisons and contrasts, and thus actively co-operate with the writer. It is not essential that you should read these adventures in the order in which they have been collected. Reading itself is an adventure; follow where you hear its call.

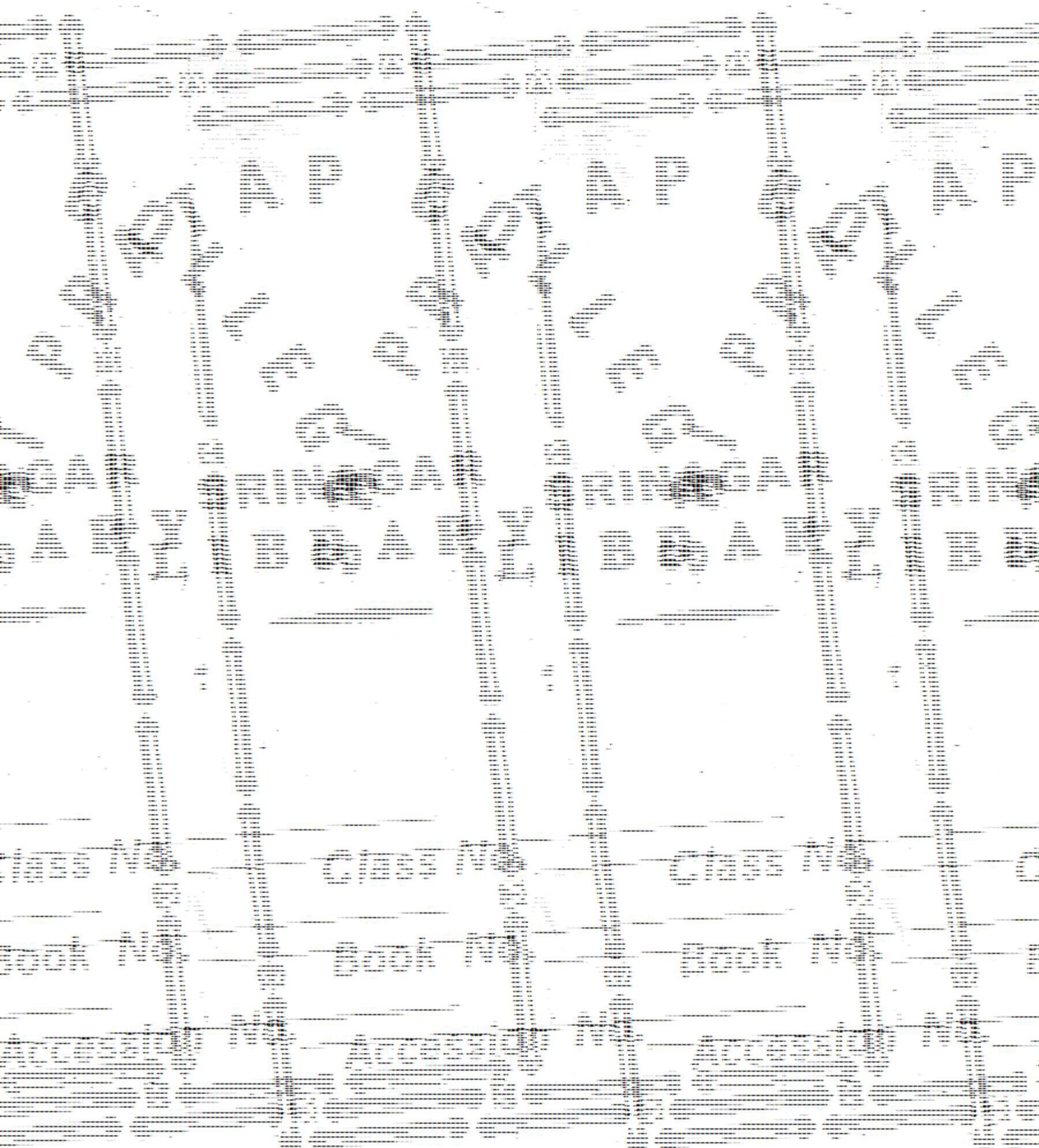
A. R. M.
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The encircled figures indicate where the adventures took place.



As a nation the British have always owed both their survival as such and the projection of their spirit into a wider sphere to a capacity for taking risks; and it is perhaps an almost tribal instinct amongst them to feel a peculiar affection for those who exhibit this capacity at its best. The man who plays always for safety is only a little less revered by them than the man who does not play unless he feels confident of victory. By the daredevil they are interested rather than impressed, for they distrust stunts; those whom, in whatever field, they honour most highly as sportsmen are generally men who combine the skill and authority of the professional with the pluck and insouciance of the amateur.

*From The Times
(May 15, 1950)*

DUEL IN THE MOUNTAINS

The Three Hostages, by John Buchan, is an exciting story of adventure, set mainly in Scotland.

Richard Hannay, the hero, becomes involved in a bitter feud with a man named Medina, a brave but unscrupulous villain, which culminates in the two men hunting each other with rifles among the Highland crags.

For the whole day they stalk each other, using all their knowledge of hunting and fieldcraft, without either gaining any advantage. Then, just as night is coming on, Medina sights Hannay and fires with deadly accuracy, wounding him severely in the left hand and causing him to lose his rifle.

Hannay, seriously hurt and unarmed, is now in a critical situation. In an effort to escape from his enemy, he starts to climb a narrow and almost vertical fissure, or chimney, on the mountain-side—with Medina, confident of success, in close pursuit.

MERCIFULLY it was now easier going—honest knee-and-back work, which I could manage in spite of my shattered fingers. I climbed feverishly with a cold sweat on my brow, but every muscle was in order, and I knew I would make no mistake. The chimney was deep, and a ledge of rock hid me from my enemy below. . . . Presently I squeezed through a gap,

swung myself up with my right hand and my knees to a shelf, and saw that the difficulties were over. A shallow gully, filled with scree, led up to the crest of the ridge. It was the place I had looked down on three weeks before.

I examined my left hand, which was in a horrid mess. The top of my thumb was blown off, and the two top joints of my middle and third fingers were smashed to pulp. I felt no pain in them, though they were dripping blood, but I had a queer numbness in my left shoulder. I managed to bind the hand up in a handkerchief, where it made a gory bundle. Then I tried to collect my wits.

Medina was coming up the chimney after me. He knew I had no rifle. He was, as I had heard, an expert cragsman, and he was the younger man by at least ten years. My first thought was to make for the upper part of the Pinnacle Ridge, and try to hide or to elude him somehow till the darkness. But he could follow me in the transparent northern night, and I must soon weaken from loss of blood. I could not hope to put sufficient distance between us for safety, and he had his deadly rifle. Somewhere in the night or in the dawning he would get me. No, I must stay and fight it out.

Could I hold the chimney? I had no weapon but stones, but I might be able to prevent a man ascending by those intricate rocks. In the chimney, at any rate, there was cover, and he could not use his rifle. . . . But would he try the chimney? Why should he not go round by the lower slopes of the Pinnacle Ridge and come on me from above?

It was the dread of his bullets that decided me. My

one passionate longing was for cover. I might get him in a place where his rifle was useless and I had a chance to use my greater muscular strength. I did not care what happened to me provided I got my hands on him. Behind all my fear and confusion and pain there was now a cold fury of rage.

So I slipped back into the chimney and descended it to where it turned slightly to the left past a nose of rock. Here I had cover, and could peer down into the darkening deeps of the great *couloir*.¹

A purple haze filled the corrie, and the Machray tops were like dull amethysts. The sky was a cloudy blue sprinkled with stars, and mingled with the last flush of sunset was the first tide of the afterglow. . . . At first all was quiet in the gully. I heard the faint trickle of stones which are always falling in such a place, and once the croak of a hungry raven. . . . Was my enemy there? Did he know of the easier route up the Pinnacle Ridge? Would he not assume that if I could climb the cleft he could follow, and would he feel any dread of a man with no gun and a shattered hand?

Then from far below came a sound I recognized—iron hobnails on rock. I began to collect loose stones and made a little pile of such ammunition beside me. . . . I realized that Medina had begun the ascent of the lower pitches. Every breach in the stillness was perfectly clear—the steady scraping in the chimney, the fall of a fragment of rock as he surmounted the lower chockstone, the scraping again as he was forced out on to the containing wall. The light must have been poor, but the road was plain. Of course I saw nothing of him, for a

¹ A gully.

bulge prevented me, but my ears told me the story. Then there was silence. I realized that he had come to the place where the chimney forked.

I had my stones ready, for I hoped to get him when he was driven out on the face at the overhang, the spot where I had been when he fired.

The sounds began again, and I waited in a desperate choking calm. In a minute or two would come the crisis. I remember that the afterglow was on the Machray tops and made a pale light in the corrie below. In the cleft there was still a kind of dim twilight. Any moment I expected to see a dark thing in movement fifty feet below, which would be Medina's head.

But it did not come. The noise of scraped rock still continued, but it seemed to draw no nearer. Then I realized that I had misjudged the situation. Medina had taken the right-hand fork. He was bound to, unless he had made, like me, an earlier reconnaissance. My route in the half-light must have looked starkly impossible.

The odds were now on my side. No man in the fast-gathering darkness could hope to climb the cliff face and rejoin that chimney after its interruption. He would go on till he stuck—and then it would not be too easy to get back. I reascended my own cleft, for I had a notion that I might traverse across the space between the two forks, and find a vantage point for a view.

Very slowly and painfully, for my left arm was beginning to burn like fire and my left shoulder and neck to feel strangely paralysed, I wriggled across the steep face till I found a sort of *gendarme* of rock, beyond which the cliff fell smoothly to the lip of the other fork.

The great gully below was now a pit of darkness, but the afterglow still lingered on this upper section and I saw clearly where Medina's chimney lay, where it narrowed and where it ran out. I fixed myself so as to prevent myself falling for I feared I was becoming light-headed. Then I remembered Angus's rope, got it unrolled, took a coil round my waist, and made a hitch over the *gendarme*.

There was a smothered cry from below, and suddenly came the ring of metal on stone, and then a clatter of something falling. I knew what it meant. Medina's rifle had gone the way of mine and lay now among the boulders at the chimney foot. At last we stood on equal terms, and, befogged as my mind was, I saw that nothing now could stand between us and a settlement.

It seemed to me that I saw something moving in the half-light. If it was Medina, he had left the chimney and was trying the face. That way I knew there was no hope. He would be forced back, and surely would soon realize the folly of it and descend. Now that his rifle had gone my hatred ebbed. I seemed only to be watching a fellow-mountaineer in a quandary.

He could not have been forty feet from me, for I heard his quick breathing. He was striving hard for holds, and the rock must have been rotten, for there was a continuous dropping of fragments, and once a considerable boulder hurtled down the *coulair*.

"Go back, man," I cried instinctively. "Back to the chimney. You can't get further that way."

I suppose he heard me, for he made a more violent effort, and I thought I could see him sprawl at a foothold which he missed, and then swing out on his hands. He

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was evidently weakening, for I heard a sob of weariness. If he could not regain the chimney, there was three hundred feet of a fall to the boulders at the foot.

"Medina," I yelled, "I've got a rope. I'm going to send it down to you. Get your arm in the loop."

I made a noose at the end with my teeth and my right hand, working with a maniac's fury.

"I'll fling it straight out," I cried. "Catch it when it falls to you."

My cast was good enough, but he let it pass, and the rope dangled down into the abyss.

"Oh, damn it, man," I roared, "you can trust me. We'll have it out when I get you safe. You'll break your neck if you hang there."

Again I threw, and suddenly the rope tightened. He believed my word, and I think that was the greatest compliment ever paid me in all my days.

"Now you're held," I cried. "I've got a belay here. Try and climb back into the chimney."

He understood and began to move. But his arms and legs must have been numb with fatigue, for suddenly that happened which I feared. There was a wild slipping and plunging, and then he swung out limply, missing the chimney, right on to the smooth wall of the cliff.

There was nothing for it but to haul him back. I knew Angus's ropes too well to have any confidence in them, and I had only the one good hand. The rope ran through a groove of stone which I had covered with my coat, and I hoped to work it even with a single arm by moving slowly upwards.

"I'll pull you up," I yelled, "but for God's sake give

me some help. Don't hang on the rope more than you need."

My loop was a large one and I think he had got both arms through it. He was a monstrous weight, limp and dead as a sack, for though I could feel him scraping and kicking at the cliff face, the rock was too smooth for fissures. I held the rope with my feet planted against boulders, and wrought till my muscles cracked. Inch by inch I was drawing him in, till I realized the danger.

The rope was rating¹ on the sharp brink beyond the chimney and might at any moment be cut by a knife-edge.

"Medina,"—my voice must have been like a wild animal's scream—"this is too dangerous. I'm going to let you down a bit so that you can traverse. There's a sort of ledge down there. For Heaven's sake go canny with this rope."

I slipped the belay from the *gendarme*, and hideously difficult it was. Then I moved farther down to a little platform nearer the chimney. This gave me about six extra yards.

"Now," I cried, when I had let him slip down, "a little to your left. Do you feel the ledge?"

He had found some sort of foothold, and for a moment there was a relaxation of the strain. The rope swayed to my right towards the chimney. I began to see a glimmer of hope.

"Cheer up," I cried. "Once in the chimney you're safe. Sing out when you reach it."

The answer out of the darkness was a sob. I think giddiness must have overtaken him, or that atrophy of

¹ Rubbing or chafing.

muscle which is the peril of rock-climbing. Suddenly the rope scorched my fingers and a shock came on my middle which dragged me to the very edge of the abyss.

I still believe that I could have saved him if I had had the use of both my hands, for I could have guided the rope away from that fatal knife-edge. I knew it was hopeless, but I put every ounce of strength and will into the effort to swing it with its burden into the chimney. He gave me no help, for I think—I hope—he was unconscious. Next second the strands had parted.

JOHN BUCHAN,
The Three Hostages



THE WOODEN HORSE

DURING the first and second world wars many escapes from prison camps were made by means of tunnels, dug with infinite patience and caution by the prisoners, who worked under great difficulties. Their gaolers, expecting them to try to make a tunnel, took every precaution to prevent their doing so; moreover, every implement used had to be improvised from anything that came to hand.

The Wooden Horse, by Eric Williams, is a true and epic story of how prisoners brilliantly outwitted their guards and gained their well-deserved freedom. The original 'Wooden Horse' was used to get into a strongly guarded camp; the modern one was used to get out.

This extract tells how the tunnel was first started, and it also shows how, despite their grim situation, the prisoners managed to retain a sense of humour.

BETWEEN them they had built the vaulting horse. It stood four feet six inches high, the base covering an area of five feet by three feet. The sides were covered with two-feet-square plywood sheets from Red Cross packing cases stolen from the German store. The sides tapered up to the top, which was of solid wood boards padded with their bedding and covered with white linen material taken from the bales in which the

cigarettes arrived from England. There were four slots, four inches long by three inches wide, cut in the plywood sides. When pieces of rafter six feet long and three inches by two inches thick had been pushed through these holes the horse could be carried by four men in the manner of a sedan chair.

The horse was kept in the canteen. A canteen in name only—a long, low extension to the camp kitchen containing the barber's shop and a large empty room used as a band practice room. Like all the other buildings in the compound, it was raised above the surface of the ground; but it was built on a brick foundation and more solidly than the living quarters. The entrance was by double doors reached by a short flight of wide wooden steps.

While the horse was being built John had been recruiting prisoners for the vaulting. He had posters made which he stuck up round the camp, advertising gym classes which would be held every afternoon. Special prisoners were detailed to talk to the German guards, remarking on this typical English craze for exercise and telling them, casually, about the vaulting-horse.

That evening Peter made the top section of the shoring for the vertical shaft. He made it with four sides of a plywood packing case reinforced and slotted so that they could be assembled into a rigid four-sided box without top or bottom. The box would stand a considerable inwards pressure.

John spent the evening in making twelve bags from the bottoms of trouser legs. Several of the prisoners had made themselves shorts by cutting their trousers off

above the knee. When John had sewn the bottoms together, roughly hemmed the tops and inserted string, the trouser legs had become bags about twelve inches long. He fashioned hooks from strong wire with which he intended to suspend the bags inside the horse.

During the week they had made two sand pits, one at the side and one at the head of where the horse was standing. They had made these ostensibly to soften the shock of landing on their bare feet. Actually they served as a datum mark to ensure that they always replaced the horse on the exact spot.

The next afternoon they took the horse out with John inside it. He took with him a cardboard Red Cross box to hold the surface sand, the trouser-leg bags and hooks, one side of the vertical shoring and the bricklayer's trowel they had stolen from the unfinished shower baths.

Inside the horse John worked quickly. Scraping up the dark grey surface sand, he put it into the cardboard box and started to dig a deep trench for one side of the shoring. He put the bright yellow excavated sand into the trouser-leg bags.

As the trench grew deeper he had difficulty in reaching the bottom. He made it wider and had to bank the extra sand against one end of the horse. It was hot inside the horse, and he began to sweat.

He finished the trench and put the plywood sheet in position. He replaced the surplus sand, ramming it down with the handle of the trowel, packing the shoring tight.

Standing on the framework of the horse, he carefully

spread the sand over the plywood sheet, packing it down hard, finally sprinkling the grey sand over the whole area covered by the horse—obliterating his foot and finger marks.

Calling softly to Peter, he gave word that he had finished.

The vaulters inserted the carrying poles and staggered back into the canteen with John and the bags of sand.

Once inside the canteen they transferred the sand from the trouser-leg bags into long, sausage-like sacks made from the arms and legs of woollen underwear. These they carried away slung round their necks and down inside their trouser-legs.

The sand was dispersed in various places around the compound, some of it finding its way by devious routes to the latrines, some of it buried under the huts, some of it carried out in specially made trouser pockets and dug into the tomato patches outside the huts.

It took them four days to sink the four sides of the box. Working alternately, they sank the box in the ground and removed the sand from inside it. When they reached the bottom of the woodwork they dug deeper still, putting bricks under the four corners of the box to support it. They made a trap of bed-boards and replaced this and the surface sand whenever they left the hole.

Finally they had made a hole five feet deep and two feet six inches square. They had dropped the wooden box twelve inches as they worked. The top of the box was now eighteen inches below the surface of the ground. This eighteen inches of sand above the wooden trap gave them security from the probing rods of the

ferrets¹ and was also deep enough to deaden any hollow sound when the trap was walked on. But it was too much sand to remove each time before reaching the trap. To make this easier they filled bags, made from woollen undervests. These they placed on top of the trap, covering them with merely six to eight inches of surface sand. The bags were thin enough not to impede the progress of the ferret's probe and enable them to uncover and recover the trap more quickly.

The wooden box stood on four brick piles two feet high. On three sides the shaft below the wooden box was shored with pieces of bed-board. The fourth side was left open for the tunnel.

It was possible to stand in the shaft, but it was not possible to kneel. To get into the tunnel they were forced to make a short burrow in the opposite direction. Into this they thrust their feet while kneeling to enter the tunnel.

The first seven feet of the tunnel was shored solid with bed-boards. The shoring was made by Peter, in the evenings, in the security of their room and taken down to the tunnel in sections and reassembled there. The whole of the work was done with a table knife and a red-hot poker.

To assemble the shoring Peter lay on his back in the darkness of the narrow tunnel, scraping away sufficient sand to slide the main bearers into position before inserting the bed-boards. He had to work slowly and carefully, fearful all the time that a sudden fall of sand would bury him. He was alone down there and even

¹ From time to time the Germans tested the ground to see if there had been attempts at tunnelling.

a small fall of sand would be enough to pin him, helpless, on his back in the narrowness of the tunnel.

When the ceiling of the tunnel was in position they had to fill the space between the top of the tunnel and the wooden ceiling with sand. If this were not done the sand would fall and the ceiling become higher and higher until a telltale subsidence of the surface would reveal the path of the tunnel.

After the first seven feet of shoring, which they built to take the force of the impact of the vaulters on the surface, the tunnel ran on without any shoring whatever.

The tunnel was very small. They had quickly seen that the progress of the work would be determined by the speed with which they could get the excavated sand away. The smaller they made the tunnel the less sand they would have to dispose of and the faster would go the work.

While one of them supervised the vaulting the other dug in the tunnel. He worked alone down there. Once he got into the tunnel with his hands in front of his head he had to stay like that. He could not get his arms behind him again. Nor could he crawl with them doubled up. It was fingers and toes all the way until he got to the end of the tunnel. Once he got there he scraped some sand from the face with a trowel and crawled backwards down the tunnel dragging the sand with him. When he got back to the vertical shaft he had brought enough sand to fill half a bag. And there were twelve bags to fill.

There was no light in the tunnel and very little air. He worked entirely naked and spent his spell of work in a bath of perspiration. He worked naked because it

was cooler and if he wore even the lightest clothes he scraped a certain amount of sand from the sides of the tunnel as he crawled along. Each bag of sand that was scraped from the sides of the tunnel meant one less bag taken from the face.

And so they worked until they had dug a tunnel forty feet long. After forty feet they could do no more. They had reached the limit of their endurance. The farther they pushed the tunnel the more difficult the work became. The air was bad; and they were taking two hours to fill the twelve bags. Not only were the tunnellers exhausted by the twenty-four times repeated crawl up the tunnel, but the vaulters, who had been vaulting every afternoon of the two months that it had taken to dig the forty feet, were exhausted too. The tunnellers were given extra food, but the vaulters were not, and they had little energy to spare.

Peter and John had devised games and variations on the theme of vaulting. A dozen men could not vault for two hours without looking unnatural about it. The whole time one of the tunnellers was below ground the others would be in the vaulting team trying to make the two hours that the horse stood there appear as natural as possible. It was not easy, especially when the ferret was standing within earshot of the horse, watching the vaulting.

They organized a medicine-ball and a deck-tennis quoit and stood in a circle round the horse throwing them to one another. They even organized a run round the circuit—leaving the horse vulnerable and alone with the trap open below it.

It was a considerable physical strain working in the

tunnel; yet both of them preferred it to organizing the vaulting.

The end came one afternoon while John was in the tunnel. Peter had gone to the main gate to find out how many Germans were in the compound. It was ten minutes before they were due to take the horse in.

As he was walking back towards the horse he was met by one of the vaulters, pale-faced and running.

"What's wrong?" Peter asked.

"There's been a fall."

"Where?"

"Near the horse."

"Is John all right?"

"We shouted to him, but we can't get a reply."

Peter ran towards the horse. A fall probably meant that John was trapped. There were no air-holes. He would be caught in the end of the tunnel, suffocating, trapped by the fall of sand.

The vaulters were grouped round a man who was lying on the ground. Peter glanced quickly towards the sentry boxes above the wire. The guards were watching.

"Where's the fall?" he asked.

"Wilde's lying on it. A hole suddenly appeared, so Wilde lay on it to stop the guards seeing it. He's pretending he's hurt his leg."

"How's John?"

"We can't get a reply."

Lord, Peter thought, John's had it. He wanted to overturn the horse and go down, but the thought of the discovery of the tunnel stopped him. Old John would be furious if he panicked for nothing.

"Send someone for a stretcher," he said. "We must make this look as natural as possible."

Two of the vaulters went for a stretcher. Peter crouched by Nigel's feet, his head near the horse. "John," he called, "John."

No answer.

"Roll over, Nig," he said.

Nigel rolled over. There was a hole, about as thick as his arm, going down into the darkness of the tunnel.

"John," he called, "John!"

"Hallo, Pete." The answer was weak.

"What happened?"

"There's been a fall, but I can clear it. I've taken some of the shoring from the shaft. I'll have it fixed in a jiffy. Can you fill it from the top?"

"O.K. Let me know when you've got it fixed." He pretended to attend to Nigel's leg.

"The confounded goons seem interested," Nigel said.

"The chaps with the stretcher will be here in a minute," Peter told him. "They'll carry you to your hut. That'll explain what we've been doing."

Presently he heard John's voice, thinly, from inside the tunnel. "I'm just putting the shoring in. You can fill in in about five minutes."

What a man, Peter thought. What a man. Good old John. He poked solicitously at Nigel's leg. The two vaulters returned with the stretcher and a first-aid kit. Peter made a great business of bandaging Nigel's leg while the others, shuffling round, kicked the sand towards the hole.

"It'll sink a bit," Peter said. "We'll kick some more over it later on. What's the time?"

"Three-thirty."

"My heavens, it's roll-call at four! We must get John up before then." He banged on the side of the horse. There was no reply.

Ten minutes passed. Still there was no sign from John.

Oh, Lord, we've had it, Peter thought. If we can't get him up before roll-call we've had it. "Come on, chaps, let's get vaulting," he said. "We can't just stand around here."

They began to vault again. Then he heard John's voice, urgently, from inside the horse. "Hey, Pete, what's the time?"

"You've got five minutes."

"It's a hell of a mess."

At the end of the five minutes they carried him into the canteen. He could hardly stand. "It's a hell of a mess," he said. "There's a bit of tree root there and the vaulting must have shaken it loose. I've jammed it up temporarily, but it needs proper shoring."

"I'll take some down with me to-morrow," Peter said.

ERIC WILLIAMS,
The Wooden Horse

ESCAPE INTO SPAIN

Farewell Campo 12, by Brigadier Hargest, is another classic story of escape, this time from a castle in Italy. By means of a tunnel six high-ranking British officers manage to get away by night and make for the Swiss border. Two quite elderly generals set out to walk all the way, but after having gone over a hundred miles they are recaptured. The other four, disguised as Italian workmen, go by train and reach Milan, which is only a few miles from the border. Here two of them are also captured, but the last two reach Switzerland and safety. Even then they are not satisfied, but determine to try to cross France, which is still occupied by the Germans, to Spain and Gibraltar. They travel separately and both are helped by members of the French Resistance Movement. The first officer reaches Spain safely but dies soon afterwards from the rigours of his escape. The extract below tells how Brigadier Hargest, the second officer, finally crosses the Pyrenees to Spain and freedom.

WE all lunched together for the last time—Georges, my host and hostess, and I. Then I changed, and when I returned to the dining-room I presented a passable imitation of a Basque workman, with a blouse to match my overalls, a black tie, my heavy boots caked with mud, an old beret, and a shabby leather coat on my arm. In place of my despatch case I carried a little pack.

When I offered my clothes to my host he accepted them reluctantly, insisting that he would send the little case to me after the war. Then another good-bye.

I knew the railway-station well by this time, and was confident of myself under most circumstances. We shared the long third-class carriage with some farm women and a party of young men who were going off to a forestry camp on forced labour. At the start they were very serious and despondent, but as we travelled they grew friendly and brightened up considerably. I gathered that the service was most unpopular.

Late that evening we arrived at a lovely old hill town. Mounting the bicycles we had brought with us, we had what was to me a fantastic ride through narrow streets, over high bridges, along a road cut out of a cliff high above a river. In the brilliant moonlight the land above and below was like a fairyland.

We reached a village and stopped at one of the houses, taking our cycles inside at once. There we met my next host and his wife, two simple French working people, eating their supper before the log fire on which it was cooked. I liked them at once, especially Jean—that, of course, is not his name. He knew only one word of English, 'yes,' and he used it emphatically at the most unexpected times. Still, it was friendlier than 'no.' He produced a railwayman's jacket for me and a cap with gold facings, and outlined my job on the morrow.

We were to go down to the station at five o'clock and board the guard's van of a goods-train going to the frontier. It would be well on its way by dawn. I was to be a kind of second guard, doing odd jobs, taking

in parcels and bicycles and passing them out again at their destinations; if there was nothing better to do I could always carry a lamp, which after daylight could be cleaned.

The next stage of the journey was to be the hardest. No one could enter the Pyrenean frontier area without a safe-conduct signed by a high-ranking German officer. Of course I had one; nevertheless, I slept only fairly that night, waking up to rehearse my part in the next adventure. At four-thirty we rose, had a cup of coffee, and packed some bread and wine in the usual railway basket; in addition I carried a black and white hen that Jean was taking up the line to a friend. At the station were two trains going in opposite directions. Georges was going back with the bicycles on one; I was going on in the other. I have never seemed to harden to good-byes, and I felt this one deeply. I had grown to love and admire this little hero with his quiet smile and unfailing courage. I hope I shall meet him again.

I soon got the run of things. At first there was not much to do. At the stations I carried out a lamp and gave it to Jean, then took over any bicycles and parcels that were handed up, and never spoke a word to anyone. Between stations Jean rode somewhere else and I was left alone with another porter, who seemed to be changed at each station. Once Jean brought back the locomotive driver to meet me. He told me he had fought in Spain on the Republican side. He looked a good tough fellow too. Another time he came back with a business man who also wanted to wish me luck.

At dawn we came into a station where Jean said the train was leaving us to go down a side line and would

be away for two hours. Under his direction I picked up a mailbag and my basket, crossed the tracks and entered the station office, passing a German patrol of four on the way. Inside were about a dozen men, all railway officials, drivers, guards, and porters warming themselves at a fire while they waited to go on duty. The room was warm and full of smoke. I found a seat and simulated sleep. Jean disappeared as soon as he saw me settled. Although every one of those men must have known that I was not one of them, they took not the slightest notice of me. They just went on talking. One, who was breakfasting off a piece of bread and cheese, brought his wine bottle over and offered me a drink. I took out my bread and mug and joined him without a word spoken.

A German sergeant-major came in and stood surveying the dozen or so of us with *hauteur*, the only arrogant German I saw in the whole of my French journey. Within a few minutes a distinct change came over the atmosphere. One by one, without the slightest ostentation, all those French railwaymen turned round in their seats showing their backs to the German. They went on talking all the time. My breakfast companion touched me on the shoulder and said: "Come over to the fire." He might have added: "away from that fellow." I could hear it in his voice. I went, and slouched on my stool like one very weary. In a little while one of the men went over to the German, who by this time was sitting down, and said that he must have his stool in order to begin work. The sergeant-major stood there a while knocking the dottle out of his pipe; then he departed abruptly, fairly frozen out.

The train returned and we set off again, climbing higher all the time and going deeper into the wild gorge that led up to the pass over this section of the Pyrenees. Quite unlike the Swiss Alps, it had its own beauty. The trees had lost their leaves, and the whole scene was of early winter with heavy frosts pending. Soon we saw the snow; once above the forest line there was sheer rugged grandeur. When we passed through a tunnel and began to descend, I knew I was over the watershed and on the downhill run to Spain.

At the station for the tiny mountain state of Andorra the train made a long halt and I had to endure a tense twenty minutes. Jean came along and said that the train patrol was coming through inspecting all papers. I busied myself in the office part of the van, taking various papers out of pigeon-holes, checking up figures, and tossing the papers back. Out of the corner of my eye I saw the patrol approach the open door and look up at me. As they stood on the track leaning into the van to look round, I went on working busily, concentrating on keeping calm and not daring to meet their eyes. It seemed a lifetime before I heard them turn away and troop back alongside the train. I looked up at Jean, who was at the other end of the van, very tense. When he saw that they had gone he placed his hand over his heart and gave a loud "Ah!" like one deciding to live again. Then he walked over to a notice in German posted on the wall and spat on it. It made me feel better, too.

When we started again he told me he had telephoned the frontier station on railway business and learned in passing that there were a lot of Germans and French

police on the platform. Things did not look too propitious. He suggested that at the next station but one I should leave the train and go into hiding, so when we stopped I picked up the mailbag, while Jean, carrying my little pack under his arm, led the way towards the office. The patrol jumped down to watch the train and the platforms, and we walked straight past them into the office. A very large stationmaster was writing at his desk. When Jean spoke a few words to him he opened a door behind him and pushed me through with his hand without looking up. "Up the stairs," was all he said. As I ran I heard the door close behind me. On the landing there were two women. One of them looked at me for less than a second: "Ah, I know. Go into that bedroom." As I reached the door I heard Jean's whistle and the train running out of the station, taking the German patrol with it.

After a little while the stationmaster and his wife came in and invited me into the warm kitchen, where I told them my story. They had not been told about me; but they said all would be well. A German patrol went up the road but they told me not to worry about it. No one would go there, and meanwhile I must eat and rest. Theirs was the only house near the station; but I could see a mountain village a mile away, and a little later I saw the second lady, a visitor for the day, set off towards it and return with a sack of potatoes on her back—more black market.

At three o'clock the train returned, and Jean ran up the stairs. Everything seemed to be all right. When darkness fell a man would come for me with two bicycles, a man I could trust implicitly. He said: "Good

luck," and impulsively embraced me and dashed down the stairs to his train. In a few minutes I saw his van disappear round a bend in the line.

At six o'clock, just as we were sitting down to supper, a young man came in. He had the bicycles, and as it was the Germans' supper hour he said it would be advisable to go at once. I liked the look of this fellow—we'll call him François. Spare and alert, with a face that in profile reminded me of an eagle, he looked as if he would be the right man in a tight corner.

Another good-bye, this time in the darkness of the porch, and François and I mounted our cycles on the moonlit road. I asked him what I should do if we met the German patrol.

"Go straight on," he said, "and leave them to me. I know them pretty well."

I'll never forget that ride. We climbed a little, then the road began a long descent at a fairly steep grade, and all I could do was hang on. The route ran over bridges, across small flats, along steep cliff-sides; the effect of the moonlight and shadows as we passed was bewildering. We met no one. The road beneath me became rougher and rougher, and try as I might I could not avoid the bumps and ruts for the very good reason that I could not see them. After a few miles my body felt as if it had split in two. Hanging on became an ordeal, but I was afraid to get off. I became obsessed with the idea that if I did a German would put out his hand for me; so I kept on following François. At last a village came in sight and at a road junction François dismounted. I tumbled off, what was left of me. Stiffly I put my hand on the front tyre; it was quite flat.

We had supper in my new friend's little kitchen with his young wife, a small, very pretty girl who showed clearly the traces of Spanish blood apparent in most of the people in this area. All the Pyrenean folk on both sides of the frontier are small, and for the first time in my life my bare five feet eight gave me a feeling of size. A party of four people came in and entered into a discussion in Spanish; from their gestures I knew it was about me. The strangers were an old man, his wife, and two daughters, and although they were friendly I was uneasy at being the subject of so much talk in such a place. I went up to bed in a small room spotlessly clean, with evidences of the mountain climber everywhere—skis, ice axes, alpenstocks¹—like Switzerland and Rolf Burgis's home in Belp on a small scale. François came up and we discussed ski-ing awhile; then he asked me if I was unhappy because strangers knew of my presence. I admitted that I was uneasy but that I trusted him completely.

"Do you know," he said, "that the old lady and her two daughters are spending all to-night, until we leave here, watching the roads for the German patrols? When the time comes they will tell me exactly where they are."

I felt very penitent and humble towards those good people, who were doing so much for me, a stranger.

At about one o'clock we rose and went down to the kitchen, where a cup of coffee was waiting. As we drank it François's wife slipped out into the moonlight. Half an hour later she returned, and I asked her: "Is it all right?"

"I don't know," she replied in her precise, clipped

¹ Long, pointed staffs used in climbing.

voice, "but neither my friends nor I can see any Germans."

I put on my pack and we slipped out on to the little street. It was very clear and beautiful, the deep gorge surmounted by steep forest-covered slopes, while above the white snow glistened like a wedding cake in the moonlight. We crossed a field, got into a gully, and began to climb. I looked back at the sleeping village where only one light faintly showed—François's wife had left a lamp near the window to give us our direction as we climbed. Soon we entered the forest, where it was pitch dark, although we made good progress. François always led straight up the mountain. He whispered that there were plenty of tracks, some of them probably only a few yards from us, but it was too dark to see them. We climbed steadily, sometimes over bogs, one of which I went into up to my knees, then over scree, and again into woods. I was out of form after days of sitting about, and at times I thought my lungs would burst. Also, my boots were so large that, although I was wearing three pairs of socks, there was still too much room, and in the darkness I felt sure that the toes were turned up like a harlequin's.

Round about four o'clock I saw the skyline through the trees; in a little while we came out into the open and crossed some meadows. We were above the forest line. When we came to the snow it was frozen hard and made easy walking; but here and there were large icefields making dangerous going—it would have been more difficult but for the moon. At last we came over a crest and there, sticking up out of the snow, was a square stone. François bent over, read the inscription

and, standing up, said simply: "France—Spain. Now you are free."

If only I had been born a woman, to enjoy a good cry! We sat down to rest, and I offered my companion a little of the cognac I had carried from Geneva, but he said he never drank before midday. We trudged on and came to another frontier-stone, which marked the boundary between Spain and Andorra. I walked on the soil of this hardy little mountain state for a few yards and wished I could stop to visit it.

We were very high now, probably about seven thousand feet, and it was bitingly cold. The view was breath-taking. Mile after mile of snow-peaked mountains all round us, and below on the French side the deep gorge I had descended yesterday, while on the Spanish side the land fell away to a forest, beyond which was a vast plain. Away to the south-east I could see the twinkling lights of a frontier railway station. Beginning our descent, we entered the forest, coming on to a mountain track running parallel with the frontier, used by foresters and shepherds and the frontier police. It led to the nearest Spanish town, whose street lights we could see plainly far away to the east, fully twelve miles off.

Just before dawn François stopped and suggested that we should eat before he started back. He had to be at work at eight o'clock. He knew a short-cut down the mountain and did not mind meeting people when he was alone. I discarded my railway jacket and handed it over, wishing I could have kept the cap as a souvenir. Then I fished out a document that would prove my identity to the Spanish police and three one-hundred

peseta notes I had carried. I also took out my last one-thousand franc note and asked François to accept it as a poor reward for his goodness. He refused: "Don't let us spoil this. I am a patriot and no money can buy me. One day when your army lands I shall have my reward. I shall be a fighting soldier again."

He had given me a walking stick to help me up the mountain and I held it up. "François," I said, "this stick is valuable to me. It will always remind me of you and other brave men. I want to buy it. It is worth a thousand francs to me. If you think the price excessive, give the surplus to your wife as a present."

"All right," he replied. "If you put it like that."

We stood up and said good-bye, then he turned into the forest and disappeared.

I listened until the sound of his footsteps passed beyond my hearing. He was the last of a band of men and women who had guided me and cared for my safety with completely selfless devotion. They had exposed themselves to punishment, to certain death, if they were caught, and each one of them had spurned reward. I thought of them now—François and his wife, Jean, Georges, my host and hostess of the city and of the village, their servants, the doctor, and the *gendarme* away on the other side of France. They had all said the same thing: "I am a patriot. I do it for France."

I was deeply moved. Twenty-five years ago I had been given the Legion of Honour by the President of France. I knew that I would wear its ribbon in the future with a deeper understanding of the mystical quality that is called the spirit of France.

I walked down the mountain-side into Spain. I

cannot describe my feelings, a mixture of sheer happiness and grief because Miles¹ was not there to share with me the joy of freedom; but as I strode along the mists in my mind cleared. The morning was very beautiful. The sun had come up warm and stimulating, gleaming on the snow-clad Pyrenees surrounding me on three sides. Below was the valley of a river, with a plain on either side, each bordered by hard, stony mountains.

Coming over the top of a ridge, I perceived below me my immediate goal, a small town sitting on a hill in the centre of the plain. On my left as I walked I could see a frontier village, just a huge railway yard scattered with houses, set right in the lower edge of the gorge down which I had come the evening before. The railway was plain now, running up into the mountains, in and out of tunnels, crossing and recrossing the river on numerous bridges. The gorge itself was an ugly gash in the great mountain chain looming majestically above it.

Soon there were signs of life. Numerous teams of oxen came slowly up to meet me, some drawing two-wheeled carts driven by old men in ragged clothing, with the day's food for man and beast in the cart beside them. For the most part the teams walked free, led or driven by a man with a long stick with which he tapped the horns of the animals when he wanted them to go faster. They carried their feed in a sack laid between the great spread of their horns.

I greeted the drivers with a "*Buenos dias*" to which they cheerfully replied. It made me feel no end of a linguist. They did not seem in the least curious about

¹ Reginald Miles, like Brigadier Hargest, was a New Zealander. He succeeded in escaping from Italy into Spain—only to die there.

me. In the forest where they were going I had seen heaps of long logs bound together ready to be sledged down the mountain to the villages below. Long years of this practice had gouged out a deep cutting all the way down; but there were no signs that the track was being repaired. A long way from clean, well-kept Switzerland.

I had scarcely a care in the world as I strode along. The sun was warm and the future could take care of itself. I debated whether I should find a warm spot under a rock and sleep a while, just to prolong this delightful feeling of well-being; the inevitable struggle with authority would be upon me soon enough. I kept on, however, until I was pulled up with a jolt. Cutting across a field in order to avoid a village, I suddenly came upon a stone—a frontier boundary stone. I went over and examined it; but before stepping into France once more I made very sure that there was no one about to surprise me. The frontier, which had receded from my line of march, had now come back to me, and I was able to follow the course down to a corner very close to the village for which I was heading. For a moment I had a slight panic; but I could see no Germans about and decided to get as far away from that line of stones as I could.

I passed through my first Spanish village down a crooked, cobbled 'street,' really only a track between the walls of houses. It was indescribably dirty and smelly and reminiscent of the filthy villages in the Abruzzi and the equally unsavoury ones in Greece. There seems to be a belt right across Southern Europe where the same sort of trees and fruits are grown,

around the same type of village, by a race of people showing marked signs of orientalism.

An old woman and a young girl seemed to look at me suspiciously and did not return my greeting, and I could see men and women watching me from behind windows as I went down the street. Not long afterwards I looked back and there, sure enough, was a man in a green uniform about two hundred yards behind. My spirits fell to zero. I had grown to hate the sight of green uniforms in the past twelve days. I pushed on quietly, not hurrying, not losing any ground. The place was a lonely one and very near those frontier stones; I decided to keep ahead at least until I came into the town. It would be more difficult to kidnap me there.

The highway formed a semicircle at the town border and my policeman, taking a short cut, came up nearly abreast of me as I passed over a bridge. I need not have feared. He was only a slightly built young fellow who seemed to have no other intention than to get to town for stores. He carried a sack on his shoulder. I stopped and asked him if he could speak French, but he could not. I told him I was English and wanted to be taken to the Chief of Police. He signed to me to follow him into a shop where a young girl interpreted for us in French. I repeated my statement and my request. He said he would take me, but first wanted to know if I was a soldier. When I replied that I was he asked if I was an officer and what rank. When I said I was a general the girl was frankly incredulous and quite a little stir ran round the shop. Then came the question I had been warned about: "Have you any pesetas or any French francs?" I said that I had none.

Setting off we passed a café, and I asked my guide if I could have some coffee before meeting the great man. While the coffee was coming I spruced myself up a little before the bar mirror, much to the amusement of the girl bar-tender. When I had put on a black tie and brushed my hair I felt a little better. My guide went to pay for the coffee; but when, something in the manner of a magician, I produced a hundred-peseta note, he looked at me more in sorrow than in anger. When the change came back I offered him a twenty-five peseta note for his kindness, but he courteously declined to accept it. Indeed, during the two days that followed I could not persuade any of the soldiers, who did a great deal for me, to accept any tip. On the contrary, they were most anxious to 'treat' me; when one considers that their army pay is only a half-peseta a day it speaks highly for their self-respect.

We found the Chief of Police at home and, I suspect, not long out of bed. After I had explained myself and my desire to place myself under his care, this cheery, kindly little man said he thought what I stood most in need of was a meal, and summoned his wife. She was pretty, neatly dressed, and spoke French well. While she prepared some food I had a wash and a shave. After that we set about our business. There was a questionnaire of ten or eleven questions to be answered. The Chief called in five police to help and his wife to interpret. I looked over them—they were in Spanish—and from its similarity to Italian was able to understand most of them. We could have completed the business in ten minutes. But not a bit of it! This was an important occasion and one not to be thrown away

lightly. I answered each question to Madame, who interpreted it to her husband, who in turn discussed it with his assistants. Then he typed the decision with one finger while we all waited. Next, one of the police would invariably have an inspiration which he would explain volubly to his leader, who would take out the sheet, destroy it and begin another. The whole business took us from eleven o'clock until three forty-five, with a break for lunch. I did not mind in the least. The house was warm, the people kind, and having discovered that there was no chance of catching the afternoon train for Barcelona, I sat back and enjoyed myself.

They were the usual questions I had answered so many times in several countries: name, age, mother's maiden name, etc.

"How many pesetas have you?"

"Ninety-seven," I said, producing them.

"No, you haven't any. Put them back in your pocket, you may need them," said the Chief. All the rest looked on approvingly.

When it came to the question of how I crossed the frontier and where, I just looked blank and said that I was alone and had walked a very long way; but as it was dark and the country strange I could not give the haziest description of the actual point of crossing. After a little while they did not pursue the subject.

When at last it was over I bade my friend the Chief and his wife good-bye and set off, under the guidance of two soldiers, to the headquarters of the secret police.

BRIGADIER JAMES HARGEST, C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C.,
Farewell Campo 12

AN ARAB BANQUET

COLONEL T. E. LAWRENCE, "Lawrence of Arabia," became one of the almost legendary figures of the first world war.

Young, studious, small, even almost insignificant in appearance, he nevertheless became one of the outstanding leaders of the Arab revolt against the Turks. Despite his physical handicaps, he determined to make himself the equal of the strongest of the wild desert Arabs among whom he was compelled to live. Not only did he succeed in this, but by sheer will-power and determination he became even better than they. He led them on raids well behind the Turkish lines, blew up railway bridges and trains, and on at least one occasion led a camel charge to win a battle against superior numbers of the enemy. The Turks feared him so much that they offered one thousand pounds for his capture, dead or alive.

Despite many wounds and bouts of sickness he never faltered, and finally with King Feisal entered Damascus at the head of a victorious Arab army.

His book *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* tells the whole story of the Arab revolt. The extract given below shows not only one of the lighter moments of the campaign and Lawrence's unfailing sense of humour, but also gives an illuminating picture of the traditional Arab hospitality and way of life.

EACH morning, between eight and ten, a little group of blood mares under an assortment of imperfect saddlery would come to our camping place, and on them Nasir, Nesib, Zeki, and I would mount, and with perhaps a dozen of our men on foot would move solemnly across the valley by the sandy paths between the bushes. Our horses were led by our servants, since it would be immodest to ride free or fast. So eventually we would reach the tent which was to be our feast-hall for that time; each family claiming us in turn, and bitterly offended if Zaal, the adjudicator, preferred one out of just order.

As we arrived, the dogs would rush out at us, and be driven off by onlookers—always a crowd had collected round the chosen tent—and we stepped in under the ropes to its guest half, made very large for the occasion and carefully dressed with its wall curtain on the sunny side to give us the shade. The bashful host would murmur and vanish again out of sight. The tribal rugs, lurid red things from Beyrout, were ready for us, arranged down the partition curtain, along the back wall and across the dropped end, so that we sat down on three sides of an open dusty space. We might be fifty men in all.

The host would reappear, standing by the pole; our local fellow-guests, el Dheilan, Zall and other sheikhs, reluctantly let themselves be placed on the rugs between us, sharing our elbow-room on the pack-saddles, padded with folded felt rugs, over which we leaned. The front of the tent was cleared, and the dogs were frequently chased away by excited children, who ran across the empty space pulling yet smaller children after them.

Their clothes were less as their years were less, and their pot-bodies rounder. The smallest infants of all, out of their fly-black eyes, would stare at the company, gravely balanced on spread legs, stark-naked, sucking their thumbs and pushing out expectant bellies towards us.

Then would follow an awkward pause, which our friends would try to cover, by showing us on its perch the household hawk (when possible a sea-bird taken young on the Red Sea coast) or their watch-cockerel, or their greyhound. Once a tame ibex was dragged in for our admiration: another time an oryx. When these interests were exhausted they would try to find small talk to distract us from the household noises, and from noticing the urgent whispered cookery-directions wafted through the dividing curtain with a powerful smell of boiled fat and drifts of tasty meat-smoke.

After a silence the host or deputy would come forward and whisper 'Black or white,' an invitation for us to choose coffee or tea. Nasir would always answer 'Black' and the slave would be beckoned forward with the beaked coffee-pot in one hand, and three or four clinking cups of white ware in the other. He would dash a few drops of coffee into the uppermost cup, and proffer it to Nasir; then pour the second for me, and the third for Nesib; and pause while we turned the cups about in our hands, and sucked them carefully, to get appreciatively from them the last richest drop.

As soon as they were empty his hand was stretched to clap them noisily one above the other, and toss them out with a lesser flourish for the next guest in order, and so on round the assembly till all had drunk. Then back to Nasir again. This second cup would be tastier than

the first, partly because the pot was yielding deeper from the brew, partly because of the heel-taps of so many previous drinkers present in the cups; whilst the third and fourth rounds, if the serving of the meat delayed so long, would be of surprising flavour.

However, at last, two men came staggering through the thrilled crowd, carrying the rice and meat on a tinned copper tray or shallow bath, five feet across, set like a great brazier on a foot. In the tribe there was only this one food-bowl of the size, and an incised inscription ran round it in florid Arabic characters: "To the glory of God, and in trust of mercy at the last, the property of His poor suppliant, Auda abu Tayi." It was borrowed by the host who was to entertain us for the time; and, since my urgent brain and body made me wakeful, from my blankets in the first light I would see the dish going across country, and by marking down its goal would know where we were to feed that day.

The bowl was now brim-full, ringed round its edge by white rice in an embankment a foot wide and six inches deep, filled with legs and ribs of mutton till they toppled over. It needed two or three victims to make in the centre a dressed pyramid of meat such as honour prescribed. The centre pieces were the boiled, upturned heads, propped on their severed stumps of necks, so that the ears, brown like old leaves, flapped out on the rice surface. The jaws gaped emptily upward, pulled open to show the hollow throat with the tongue, still pink, clinging to the lower teeth; and the long incisors whitely crowned the pile, very prominent above the nostrils, pricking hair, and the lips which sneered away blackly from them.

This load was set down on the soil of the cleared space between us, where it steamed hotly, while a procession of minor helpers bore small cauldrons and copper vats in which the cooking had been done. From them, with much-bruised bowls of enamelled iron, they ladled out over the main dish all the inside and outside of sheep; little bits of yellow intestine, the white tail cushion of fat, brown muscles and meat and bristly skin, all swimming in the liquid butter and grease of the seething. The bystanders watched anxiously, muttering satisfactions when a very juicy scrap plopped out.

The fat was scalding. Every now and then a man would drop his baler with an exclamation, and plunge his burnt fingers, not reluctantly, in his mouth to cool them: but they persevered till at last their scooping rang loudly on the bottoms of the pots; and, with a gesture of triumph, they fished out the intact livers from their hiding place in the gravy and topped the yawning jaws with them.

Two raised each smaller cauldron and tilted it, letting the liquid splash down upon the meat till the rice-crater was full, and the loose grains at the edge swam in the abundance: and yet they poured, till, amid cries of astonishment from us, it was running over, and a little pool congealing in the dust. That was the final touch of splendour and the host called us to come and eat.

We feigned a deafness, as manners demanded: at last we heard him, and looked surprised at one another, each urging his fellow to move first; till Nasir rose coyly, and after him we all came forward to sink on one knee round

the tray, wedging in and cuddling up till the twenty-two for whom there was barely space were grouped around the food. We turned our right sleeves to the elbow, and, taking lead from Nasir with a low "In the name of God the merciful, the loving-king," we dipped together.

The first dip, for me, at least was always cautious, since the liquid fat was so hot that my unaccustomed fingers could seldom bear it: and so I would toy with an exposed and cooling lump of meat till others' excavations had drained my rice-segment. We would knead between the fingers (not soiling the palm) meat balls of rice and fat and liver and meat cemented by gentle pressure, and project them by leverage of the thumb from the crooked fore-finger into the mouth. With the right trick and the right construction the little lump held together and came clean off the hand; but when surplus butter and odd fragments clung, cooling, to the fingers, they had to be licked carefully to make the next effort slip easier away.

As the meat pile wore down (nobody really cared about rice: flesh was the luxury) one of the chief Howeitat eating with us would draw his dagger, silver hilted, set with turquoise, a signed masterpiece of Mohammed ibn Zari, of Jauf, and would cut criss-cross from the larger bones long diamonds of meat easily torn up between the fingers; for it was necessarily boiled very tender, since all had to be disposed of with the right hand which alone was honourable.

Our host stood by the circle, encouraging the appetite with pious ejaculations. At top speed we twisted, tore, cut and stuffed: never speaking, since conversation would insult a meal's quality, though it was proper to

smile thanks when an intimate guest passed a select fragment, or when Mohammed el Dheilan gravely handed over a huge barren bone with a blessing. On such occasions I would return the compliment with some hideous impossible lump of guts, a flippancy which rejoiced the Howeitat, but which the gracious, aristocratic Nasir saw with disapproval.

At length some of us were nearly filled, and began to play and pick; glancing sideways at the rest till they too grew slow, and at last ceased eating, elbow on knee, the hand hanging down from the wrist over the tray edge to drip, while the fat, butter and scattered grains of rice cooled into a stiff white grease which gummed the fingers together. When all had stopped, Nasir meaningly cleared his throat, and we rose up together in haste with an explosive "God requite it you, O host" to group ourselves outside among the tent-ropes while the next twenty guests inherited our leaving.

Those of us who were nice would go to the end of the tent where the flap of the roof-cloth, beyond the last poles, drooped down as an end curtain; and on this clean handkerchief (whose coarse goat-hair mesh was pliant and glossy with much use) would scrape the thickest of the fat from the hands. Then we would make back to our seats, and re-take them sighingly; while the slaves, leaving aside their portion, the skulls of the sheep, would come round our rank with a wooden bowl of water, and a coffee-cup as dipper, to splash over our fingers while we rubbed them with the tribal soap-cake.

Meantime the second and third sittings by the dish were having their turn, and then there would be one more cup of coffee, or a glass of syrup-like tea; and at

last the horses would be brought and we would slip out to them, and mount, with a quiet blessing to the hosts as we passed by. When our backs were turned the children would run in disorder upon the ravaged dish, tear our gnawed bones from one another, and escape into the open with valuable fragments to be devoured in security behind some distant bush: while the watchdogs of all the camp prowled round snapping, and the master of the tent fed the choicest offal to his greyhound.

T. E. LAWRENCE,
Seven Pillars of Wisdom

PURSUIT BY NIGHT

THE young Scots storekeeper, David Crawford, who is telling how he was pursued across difficult country in South Africa, has become the possessor of a famous collar of rubies. Whoever wears it commands the allegiance of the native Africans. The Reverend John Laputa, from whom David has obtained possession of the necklace, is trying to revive the empire of Prester John, an almost legendary Christian king of Abyssinia. Laputa's plan is to cause war between black and white.

I RAN till my breath grew short, for some kind of swift motion I had to have or choke. The events of the last few minutes had inflamed my brain. For the first time in my life I had seen men die by violence—nay, by brutal murder. I had put my soul into the blow which laid out Henriques, and I was still hot with the pride of it. Also I had in my pocket the fetich of the whole black world; I had taken their Ark of the Covenant, and soon Laputa would be on my trail. Fear, pride, and a blind exultation all throbbed in my veins. I must have run three miles before I came to my sober senses.

I put my ear to the ground, but heard no sound of pursuit. Laputa, I argued, would have enough to do for a little, shepherding his flock over the water. He might surround and capture the patrol, or he might evade it; the vow prevented him from fighting it. On

the whole I was clear that he would ignore it and push on for the rendezvous. All this would take time, and the business of the priest would have to wait. When Henriques came to he would no doubt have a story to tell, and the scouts would be on my trail. I wished I had shot the Portugoose¹ while I was at the business. It would have been no murder, but a righteous execution.

Meanwhile I must get off the road. The sand had been disturbed by an army, so there was little fear of my steps being traced. Still, it was only wise to leave the track which I would be assumed to have taken, for Laputa would guess I had fled back the way to Blaauwildebeestefontein. I turned into the bush, which here was thin and sparse like whins on a common.

The Berg must be my goal. Once on the plateau I would be inside the white man's lines. Down here in the plains I was in the country of my enemies. Arcoll meant to fight on the uplands when it came to fighting. The black man might rage as he pleased in his own flats, but we stood to defend the gates of the hills. Therefore over the Berg I must be before morning, or there would be a dead man with no tales to tell.

I think that even at the start of that night's work I realized the exceeding precariousness of my chances. Some twenty miles of bush and swamp separated me from the foot of the mountains. After that there was the climbing of them, for at the point opposite where I now stood the Berg does not descend sharply on the plain, but is broken into foot-hills around the glens of the Klein Letaba and the Letsitela. From the spot where these rivers emerge on the flats to the crown of the plateau

¹ This is in imitation of native pronunciation.

is ten miles at the shortest. I had a start of an hour or so, but before dawn I had to traverse thirty miles of unknown and difficult country. Behind me would follow the best trackers in Africa, who knew every foot of the wilderness. It was a wild hazard, but it was my only hope. At this time I was feeling pretty courageous. For one thing I had Henriques' pistol close to my leg, and for another I still thrilled with the satisfaction of having smitten his face.

I took the rubies and stowed them below my shirt and next my skin. I remember taking stock of my equipment and laughing at the humour of it. One of the heels was almost twisted off my boots, and my shirt and breeches were old at the best and ragged from hard usage. The whole outfit would have been dear at five shillings, or seven-and-six with the belt thrown in. Then there was the Portugoose's pistol, costing, say, a guinea; and last, the Prester's collar, worth several millions.

What was more important than my clothing was my bodily strength. I was still very sore from the bonds and the jog of that accursed horse, but exercise was rapidly suppling my joints. About five hours ago I had eaten a filling, though not very sustaining meal, and I thought I could go on very well till morning. But I was still badly in arrears with my sleep, and there was no chance of my snatching a minute till I was over the Berg. It was going to be a race against time, and I swore that I would drive my body to the last ounce of strength.

Moonrise was still an hour or two away, and the sky was bright with myriad stars. I knew now what starlight meant, for there was ample light to pick my way by. I steered by the Southern Cross, for I was aware that the

Berg ran north and south, and with that constellation on my left hand I was bound to reach it sooner or later. The bush closed around me with its mysterious dull green shades, and trees, which in the daytime were thin scrub, now loomed like tall timber. It was very eerie moving, a tiny fragment of mortality, in that great wide silent wilderness, with the starry vault, like an impassive celestial audience, watching with many eyes. They cheered me, those stars. In my hurry and fear and passion they spoke of the old calm dignities of man. I felt less alone when I turned my face to the lights which were slanting alike on this uncanny bush and on the homely streets of Kirkcapple.

The silence did not last long. First came the howl of a wolf, to be answered by others from every quarter of the compass. This serenade went on for a bit, till the jackals chimed in with their harsh bark. I had been caught by darkness before this when hunting on the Berg, but I was not afraid of wild beasts. That is one terror of the bush which travellers' tales have put too high. It was true that I might meet a hungry lion, but the chance was remote, and I had my pistol. Once indeed a huge animal bounded across the road a little in front of me. For a moment I took him for a lion, but on reflection I was inclined to think him a very large bush-pig.

By this time I was out of the thickest bush and into a piece of parkland with long, waving *tambuki* grass, which the Kaffirs would burn later. The moon was coming up, and her faint rays silvered the flat tops of the mimosa trees. I could hear and feel around me the rustling of animals. Once or twice a big buck—an eland or a koodoo—broke cover, and at the sight of me went off snort-

ing down the slope. Also there were droves of smaller game—rhebok and springbok and duikers—which brushed past at full gallop without even noticing me.

The sight was so novel that it set me thinking. That shy wild things should stampede like this could only mean that they had been thoroughly scared. Now obviously the thing that scared them must be on this side of the Letaba. This must mean that Laputa's army, or a large part of it, had not crossed at Dupree's Drift, but had gone up the stream to some higher ford. If that was so I must alter my course; so I bore away to the right for a mile or two, making a line due north-west.

In about an hour's time the ground descended steeply, and I saw before me the shining reaches of a river. I had the chief features of the countryside clear in my mind, both from old porings over maps, and from Arcoll's instructions. This stream must be the Little Letaba, and I must cross it if I would get to the mountains. I remembered that Majinje's kraal stood on its left bank, and higher up in its valley in the Berg 'Mpefu lived. At all costs the kraals must be avoided. Once across it I must make for the Letsitela, another tributary of the Great Letaba, and by keeping the far bank of that stream I should cross the mountains to the place on the plateau of the Wood Bush which Arcoll had told me would be his headquarters.

It is easy to talk about crossing a river, and looking to-day at the slender streak on the map I am amazed that so small a thing should have given me such ugly tremors. Yet I have rarely faced a job I liked so little. The stream ran yellow and sluggish under the clear moon. On the near side a thick growth of bush clothed

the bank, but on the far side I made out a swamp with tall bulrushes. The distance across was no more than fifty yards, but I would have swum a mile more readily in deep water. The place stank of crocodiles. There was no ripple to break the oily flow except where a derelict branch swayed with the current. Something in the stillness, the eerie light on the water, and the rotting smell of the swamp made that stream seem unhallowed and deadly.

I sat down and considered the matter. Crocodiles had always terrified me more than any created thing, and to be dragged by iron jaws to death in that hideous stream seemed to me the most awful of endings. Yet cross it I must if I were to get rid of my human enemies. I remembered a story of an escaped prisoner during the war¹ who had only the Komati River between him and safety. But he dared not enter it, and was recaptured by a Boer commando. I was determined that such cowardice should not be laid to my charge. If I was to die, I would at least have given myself every chance of life. So I braced myself as best I could, and looked for a place to enter.

The veld-craft I had mastered had taught me a few things. One was that wild animals drink at night, and that they have regular drinking places. I thought that the likeliest place for crocodiles was at or around such spots, and, therefore, I resolved to take the water away from a drinking place. I went up the bank, noting where the narrow bush-paths emerged on the water-side. I scared away several little buck, and once the violent commotion in the bush showed that I had frightened

¹ The war referred to is the Boer War of 1899-1902.

some bigger animal, perhaps a hartebeest. Still following the bank I came to a reach where the undergrowth was unbroken and the water looked deeper.

Suddenly—I fear I must use this adverb often, for all the happenings on that night were sudden—I saw a biggish animal break through the reeds on the far side. It entered the water and, whether wading or swimming I could not see, came out a little distance. Then some sense must have told it of my presence, for it turned and with a grunt made its way back. CALL

I saw that it was a big wart-hog, and began to think. Pig, unlike other beasts, drink not at night, but in the daytime. The hog had, therefore, not come to drink, but to swim across. Now, I argued, he would choose a safe place, for the wart-hog, hideous though he is, is a wise beast. What was safe for him would, therefore, in all likelihood be safe for me.

With this hope to comfort me I prepared to enter. My first care was the jewels, so, feeling them precarious in my shirt, I twined the collar round my neck and clasped it. The snake-clasp was no flimsy device of modern jewellery, and I had no fear but that it would hold. I held the pistol between my teeth, and with a prayer to God slipped into the muddy waters.

I swam in the wild way of a beginner who fears cramp. The current was light and the water moderately warm, but I seemed to go very slowly, and I was cold with apprehension. In the middle it suddenly shallowed, and my breast came against a mudshoal. I thought it was a crocodile, and in my confusion the pistol dropped from my mouth and disappeared.

I waded a few steps and then plunged into deep water

again. Almost before I knew, I was among the bulrushes, with my feet in the slime of the bank. With feverish haste I scrambled through the reeds and up through roots and undergrowth to the hard soil. I was across, but, alas, I had lost my only weapon.

The swim and the anxiety had tired me considerably, and though it meant delay, I did not dare to continue with the weight of water-logged clothes to impede me. I found a dry sheltered place in the bush and stripped to the skin. I emptied my boots and wrung out my shirt and breeches, while the Prester's jewels were blazing on my neck. Here was a queer counterpart to Laputa in the cave!

The change revived me, and I continued my way in better form. So far there had been no sign of pursuit. Before me the Letsitela was the only other stream, and from what I remembered of its character near the Berg I thought I should have little trouble. It was smaller than the Klein Letaba, and a rushing torrent where shallows must be common.

I kept running till I felt my shirt getting dry on my back. Then I restored the jewels to their old home, and found their cool touch on my breast very comforting. The country was getting more broken as I advanced. Little kopjes with thickets of wild bananas took the place of the dead levels. Long before I reached the Letsitela, I saw that I was right in my guess. It ran, a brawling mountain stream, in a narrow rift in the bush. I crossed it almost dry-shod on the boulders above a little fall, stopping for a moment to drink and lave my brow.

After that the country changed again. The wood was now getting like that which clothed the sides of the Berg.

There were tall timber-trees—yellowwood, sneezewood, essenwood, stinkwood—and the ground was carpeted with thick grass and ferns. The sight gave me my first earnest of safety. I was approaching my own country. Behind me was heathendom and the black fever flats. In front were the cool mountains and bright streams, and the guns of my own folk.

As I struggled on—for I was getting very footsore and weary—I became aware of an odd sound in my rear. It was as if something were following me. I stopped and listened with a sudden dread. Could Laputa's trackers have got up with me already? But the sound was not of human feet. It was as if some heavy animal were plunging through the undergrowth. At intervals came the soft pad of its feet on the grass.

It must be the hungry lion of my nightmare, and Henriques' pistol was in the mud of the Klein Letaba! The only thing was a tree, and I had sprung for one and scrambled wearily into the first branches when a great yellow animal came into the moonlight.

Providence had done kindly in robbing me of my pistol. The next minute I was on the ground with Colin leaping on me and baying for joy. I hugged that blessed hound and buried my head in his shaggy neck, sobbing like a child. How he had traced me I can never tell. The secret belongs only to the Maker of good and faithful dogs.

With him by my side I was a new man. The awesome loneliness had gone. I felt as if he were a message from my own people to take me safely home. He clearly knew the business afoot, for he padded beside me with never a glance to right or left. Another time he would

have been snowking in every thicket; but now he was on duty, a serious, conscientious dog with no eye but for business.

The moon went down, and the starry sky was our only light. The thick gloom which brooded over the landscape pointed to the night being far gone. I thought I saw a deeper blackness ahead which might be the line of the Berg. Then came that period of utter stillness when every bush sound is hushed and the world seems to swoon. I felt almost impious hurrying through that profound silence, when not even the leaves stirred or a frog croaked.

Suddenly as we came over a rise a little wind blew on the back of my head, and a bitter chill came into the air. I knew from nights spent in the open that it was the precursor of dawn. Sure enough, as I glanced back, far over the plain a pale glow was stealing upwards into the sky. In a few minutes the pall melted into an airy haze, and above me I saw the heavens shot with tremors of blue light. Then the fore-ground began to clear, and there before me, with their heads still muffled in vapour, were the mountains.

Xenophon's Ten Thousand did not hail the sea more gladly than I welcomed those frowning ramparts of the Berg.

Once again my weariness was eased. I cried to Colin, and together we ran down into the wide, shallow trough which lies at the foot of the hills. As the sun rose above the horizon, the black masses changed to emerald and rich umber, and the fleecy mists of the summits opened and revealed beyond shining spaces of green. Some lines of Shakespeare ran in my head,

which I have always thought the most beautiful of all poetry:

Night's candles are burned out, and jocund day
Walks tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.

Up there among the clouds was my salvation. Like the Psalmist, I lifted my eyes to the hills from whence came my aid.

Hope is a wonderful restorative. To be near the hills, to smell their odours, to see at the head of the glens the lines of the plateau where were white men and civilization—all gave me new life and courage. Colin saw my mood, and spared a moment now and then to inspect a hole or a covert. Down in the shallow trough I saw the links of a burn, the Machudi, which flowed down the glen it was my purpose to ascend. Away to the north in the direction of Majinje's were patches of Kaffir tillage, and I thought I discerned the smoke from fires. Majinje's womankind would be cooking their morning meal. To the south ran a thick patch of forest, but I saw beyond it the spur of the mountain over which runs the highroad to Wesselsburg. The clear air of dawn was like wine in my blood. I was not free, but I was on the threshold of freedom. If I could only reach my friends with the Prester's collar in my shirt, I would have performed a feat which would never be forgotten. I would have made history by my glorious folly. Breakfastless and footsore, I was yet a proud man as I crossed the hollow to the mouth of Machudi's glen.

My chickens had been counted too soon, and there was to be no hatching. Colin grew uneasy, and began to sniff upwind. I was maybe a quarter of a mile from

the glen foot, plodding through the long grass of the hollow, when the behaviour of the dog made me stop and listen. In that still air sounds carry far, and I seemed to hear the noise of feet brushing through cover. The noise came both from north and south, from the forest and from the lower course of the Machudi.

I dropped into shelter, and running with bent back got to the summit of a little bush-clad knoll. It was Colin who first caught sight of my pursuers. He was staring at a rift in the trees, and suddenly gave a short bark. I looked and saw two men, running hard, cross the grass and dip into the bed of the stream. A moment later I had a glimpse of figures on the edge of the forest, moving fast to the mouth of the glen. The pursuit had not followed me; it had waited to cut me off. Fool that I was, I had forgotten the wonders of Kaffir telegraphy. It had been easy for Laputa to send word thirty miles ahead to stop any white man who tried to cross the Berg.

And then I knew that I was very weary.

JOHN BUCHAN,
Prester John

CASUALTIES AMONG THE CAMELS

ACROSS the almost uncharted wastes of Asia Peter Fleming, a young man of twenty-seven, and a girl, Kini Maillart, journeyed some three thousand five hundred miles from Peking, in China, to Kashmir, in India.

Their route led them across sun-scorched deserts, icy, wind-swept plateaux, and finally over the mighty Himalayas themselves. They travelled almost completely unarmed and unescorted across some of the wildest country in the world, and at one stage crossed the province of Sinkiang, which was considered as difficult to enter as the forbidden land of Tibet, and in which a civil war had just ended—or so they hoped. Despite many delays and difficulties, being arrested and set free again, they plodded steadily on for over seven months.

The episode which follows tells of two of their grimmest days during their long journey.

JUNE opened with a villain's smile. The first light showed us a still, bright morning and the too-blue surface of the lake unruffled. We were near the end of the lake, and after an hour or two halted to scratch up a last supply of the saline, gritty water underneath the shingle. I had a long shot at a mandarin duck silhouetted on a little promontory, but he fell in the lake and we lost him to a breeze which had newly sprung up.

Leaving that place, we turned a little north of west, climbing up towards a low pass in the mountains on our right. We were not sorry to be done with that cerulean and redundant sheet of water.

The faint pleasure that one always feels at changing landmarks was short-lived. Within an hour's march of our watering-place things were going gravely wrong. First one camel, then a second, began to protest raucously and to drag on the head-ropes. Slow chaos overtook the caravan. Progress became jerky and sluggish, was more and more frequently interrupted by halts to shift the loads or to splice a broken head-rope. The head-ropes were fastened, according to the Mongol usage, to the wooden pin driven through the camel's nose; the other end was tied to the pack-saddle of the beast in front. Any strain on the rope is naturally painful, and a camel must be very wild or very sick before he digs in his toes and jibs hard enough to snap it.

Snow, mixed with hail, came down to scourge us. We detached the weaker of the two camels and I towed him along while Kini flicked his hindquarters where the wool was coming off in expectation of a summer non-existent up here. For half an hour we struggled on like this; but it was no good. With a last apologetic roar he knelt down and nothing we could do would make him rise. There was nothing for it but to leave him—to 'cast him on the Gobi,'¹ as the Chinese say.

The Turkis had two fresh and fairly lightly loaded camels with them, and to these we transferred his load and his pack-saddle. His sudden collapse was mysterious and could only be due, we decided, to bad water. All

¹ The reference is to the vast wastes of the Gobi Desert.

the camels had been well and marching steadily the day before, but both Slalom and I had shown unmistakable signs of being affected—though not greatly inconvenienced—by the water. In the circumstances I decided not to shoot the camel we were abandoning; for all I knew he might shake off the effects of bad water and recover his strength.

But it was horrible to leave him there, hunched, apathetic, and somehow shrunken, with the snow plastering his inexpressive face; horrible, as we rode away, to watch him dwindle to a small dark speck in a great naked sweep of desert. In our empty world the animals that served us, revealing their characters by tricks of temperament or gait, bulked almost as large as human beings. From now on the caravan marched under a shadow. The situation was not serious as yet, but the fate of one camel might be the fate of more, and, remote though the possibility of disaster was, it was at least a possibility; we were a long way from anywhere. The other ailing camel was clearly on his last legs, and Slalom was losing strength. Under a lowering sky we crawled on up towards the pass, mechanically uttering the abruptly ended yell with which Mongols urge their beasts. The sick camel moved with a faltering stride, roaring his grief.

Presently we made a short halt on a shoulder from which we got our last sight of the Ayak Kum Kul. The Turkis gave us to understand that no fuel was available for several stages to come, so we set about tearing up the little tufts which the camels ate and which had large, combustible roots; we filled several sacks and went on again. It was a chill, unfriendly evening. The great

pinnacles of rock, the huge grey tracts of plateau between them, might have belonged to another planet, a dead, ravaged star wheeling in the cold gulf of space. I thought of lawns, the quilted tree-tops of a wood below a down, tangled June hedges—for it is a strange and terrible thing that the lady novelists are right that young men in deserts do dwell with a banal wistfulness on sentimentalized, given-away-with-the-Christmas-number pictures of their native land, forgetting the by-passes, the cloudbursts, the sheaves of bluebells lashed to motor-cycle pillions, the bungalows and the banana-skins and the bowler hats.

Snow soon began to fall, and we made camp in a waterless gully about 14,000 feet up, after a trying march of nearly eleven hours. The sick camel knelt in his tracks, ominously making no attempt to search for grazing. We pitched the tent and cooked a meal and gave the horses a ration of tsamba with a little meat in it. The Turkis were depressingly rapacious and seemed blind to the fact that they were responsible for letting the camels get bad water. "Afraid horses won't last long," ends the despondent entry in my diary.

At dawn next day snow was falling again. The camels had wandered far afield, and while we waited for them to be fetched inaction bred misgivings. The sick camel still knelt where he had halted the night before. Despite his protests we put some menthol in his nostrils; but he appeared impervious to the reviving qualities which we believed this treatment to possess and registered only annoyance. The skeleton horses munched their tsamba listlessly. Snowflakes vanished with a resigned hiss as they settled on the ashes of the fire.

By 8.30 we started, putting a nominal load of two light suitcases on the sick camel. When we got him to his feet he made water in prodigious quantities, and I hoped that this was a symptom of recovery. The way at first lay down hill, and for three hours I dragged him along, though so slowly that the other camels gained on us steadily and at the cost of so much exertion that to do a whole stage like this would clearly be more than I could manage. Then we began to climb, and though the slope was not a steep one it was enough to turn the scales. The camel knelt down. With superhuman efforts Kini got him to his feet again, but ten more yards was the limit of his capacity, and he knelt again with an air of finality.

Sadly we took the suitcases off him and put them on to Slalom. The pack-saddles we abandoned, and it was not till days afterwards that I cursed myself for not ripping them open and feeding the stuffing to the horses. The camel watched us move off with mercifully unemotional eyes.

We had now lost two camels out of four; but statistics are ever misleading, and our predicament was not as grave as it had been; for another, there was room for a certain amount of freight on the two camels of the Turkis. So we did not as yet face the necessity of jettisoning some of our scanty and precious belongings, though already each of us was secretly drawing up a provisional roster of sacrifice.

After leaving the camel we climbed on up to a wide col beyond which a broken, rolling tableland stretched between a ring of 20,000-foot peaks, many of them capped with eternal snows. Cynara was going very

lame but at least seemed lively; so we transferred the suitcases to her, for Slalom was weaker than he had ever been before. Only with one dragging and the other whipping could we keep him moving at all, and our pace was so slow that the camels were soon out of sight ahead of us. This increased our resentment at the Turkis and flavoured it uneasily with suspicion. They had already thrown away two camels as casually as if they had been half-smoked cigarettes; and, since they had with them in the loads most of our money and possessions, they might be expected to view with an even greater degree of composure the possibility of our being benighted.

The possibility was undoubtedly there. There was no trail of any sort for us to follow; we had only the camels' tracks to guide us and these, owing to the hardness of the ground, were often invisible for long stretches at a time. One of my eyes was out of action owing to a recrudescence of the trouble I had had in the mountains south of the Koko Nor, and when I was in the lead, dragging Slalom, we went astray several times.

We struggled on in bleak uncertainty. Towards the end of the afternoon the tracks led us steeply down from the plateau by a dried-up bed; there were no signs of moisture, but here and there the tips of a few blades of grass braved the inclement air and raised our hopes. But when at last we debouched into a great dun valley there was no further trace of water or vegetation, and we could see the camels still moving tinily, two or three miles ahead.

Slalom, by this time, was very far gone. He no longer

answered to the whip, and our advance had become a miniature pageant of despair. In front went Kini, bent almost double, dragging doggedly on the reins. Behind the tottering Slalom, I, also bowed, barged with one shoulder against his gaunt hindquarters; and behind me limped the little mare on whose burden of suitcases tattered hotel labels incongruously evoked palm trees and beaches, crowded streets and 'confort anglais.' We moved at a snail's pace with frequent panting halts, for we had to push and pull for all we were worth and the altitude found us out. Each halt made it harder to get Slalom going again.

We crawled across the iron floor of the valley. The light thickened (with apologies to Macbeth, there is no other word for it) and the background to our exertions was suitably grim; the camels were far away out of sight and we were alone in a world where life had no other representatives. Dusk, even in cheerless weather, can be tranquil or romantic or just comfortably sad; this dusk was none of those things, but hard and drab and what's-the-use? like an early Monday morning in a city. We consoled ourselves with the reflection that we had not much further to go.

But we had. We expected to find the camels halted at the tail-end of the valley; but when, rounding a bluff, we got there we saw that there was no water, no grazing. They had gone on and—worse—up, over a cruel little pass leading northward. In normal conditions it was nothing of a climb; but we were virtually carrying Slalom, and the last two or three hours would have been impossible if we had not been going downhill. We were both very tired, and our elaborately

facetious protests, our grin-and-bear-it grumbling, had become the most flimsy of façades because exhaustion made our voices hoarse.

Slalom, it was clear, was done for, would be no more use to us; but we could not leave him here. In the first place, there was no grass and no water and we were fond of him; in the second place, we had striven so hard all through the day to get him even as far as this that we were as it were obsessed, and could not tolerate the idea of failing to bring him into camp. So after a short rest we attacked the pass.

Somehow we manhandled Slalom to the top. I do not remember much about it, except that once, as we leant gasping on the horses, I noticed that Kini's face looked strangely drawn. It was no great feat, but we had had a long, hard day and (I think this was more important) there was no certainty beyond the pass, no promise of a fire and camp; we had no idea how much longer we were condemned to this Sisyphean advance. Anyone can spurt on the last lap; but we had no reason to suppose this was the last.

Nor was it. Night had almost fallen when we reached the head of the pass, but far down another valley we could just make out the camels, still moving; as we watched them they disappeared behind a bluff. Beyond the bluff a whitish streak showed dimly. Was it salt? Or was it snow, or a frozen river? We would have given a lot to know. To move at all was difficult; to move in the right direction would shortly be impossible, for by night the faintly marked camel-tracks would be indecipherable and night was nearly on us. Still, the next stretch was visibly downhill. We went on.

Our movements had become mechanical. Vaguely aware of jagged peaks softening and blurring around us, of a herd of pale orongo antelope all ghostly in the last of the light, we dropped down to the bottom of the valley. As other landmarks faded, the pale streak before us, a potential journey's end, grew more and more alluring and intriguing; our eyes were tired with staring, our minds with speculation, our hearts with hope deferred.

But of course it was all right in the end. Four dark shapes loomed up ahead of us; they were the camels, unloaded. We stumbled rather blindly into camp—a more than usually courtesy title since the Turkis had no matches with which to light a fire. For hours I had been marshalling my exiguous vocabulary into a denunciation of their conduct; but when the time came I abandoned it. Their knowledge that I was unacquainted with their language had never yet curbed their volubility, and I did not feel equal to coping with twenty minutes of expostulation in order to convey a bald and rudimentary rebuke whose cogency was unlikely to be felt. So we unsaddled in a chilly silence, fancying—rightly, I think—that we detected signs of shame in their demeanour.

The routine of pitching the tent was carried out stiffly: lifting boxes, hammering pegs, we moved in a numb and dreamy way. The white streak had materialized as ice partially covering a little river, and I took Cynara down for a drink (the horses had had no water for thirty-six hours and very little water—bad at that—for several days) but Slalom would not move. He stood in the firelight on the spot where we had ceased

to push him, hanging his ugly but familiar head, visibly alive only because he was still on his feet.

We had been marching for eleven hours, with no food since dawn; but we were not hungry. We drank some cocoa and as it warmed our bellies felt a faint reaction, a kind of drowsy triumph. So far it had been an easy journey; to-day, for the first time, we had faced crisis of a sort without assistance. And though it was no great achievement to have dragged a failing horse a few miles further than seemed at one time possible, we were pleased that we had done our best by Slalom and we hoped that we had saved his life. In the friendly candle-light we grew complacent and forgot the rigours of the day.

PETER FLEMING,
News from Tartary

THE TIGER SMILED

Do you remember some of the dangerous moments of your life? The day when the brakes on your bicycle failed to work; the occasion when you were nearly knocked down by a car; or the time when your foot slipped as you were climbing some rocks at the seaside? They were moments when your heart seemed to stand still. Do you remember even more terrible and frightening experiences you had in nightmares, when you were being chased by some ferocious animal, or when you came face to face with a deadly snake? Luckily, at the most terrifying moment you always wakened up, and what a relief it was to find that you were safe and sound in bed!

This true incident makes even nightmares seem happy experiences. Jim Corbett, a famous tiger-hunter who always stalked them on foot, stepped past the end of a rock in a narrow ravine. Eight feet in front of him was a huge man-eating tigress, "and on her face was a smile similar to that one sees on the face of a dog welcoming his master home after a long absence."

ABOUT a hundred yards along the path I came to a ravine. On the far side of this the path entered very heavy undergrowth, and as it was inadvisable to go into thick cover with two men following me, I decided to take to the ravine, follow it down to its junction with

the valley, work up the valley, and pick up the path on the far side of the undergrowth.

The ravine was about ten yards wide and four or five feet deep, and as I stepped down into it a nightjar fluttered off a rock on which I had put my hand. On looking at the spot from which the bird had risen, I saw two eggs. These eggs, straw-coloured, with rich brown markings, were of a most unusual shape, one being long and very pointed while the other was as round as a marble; and as my collection lacked nightjar eggs I decided to add this odd clutch to it. I had no receptacle of any kind in which to carry the eggs, so, cupping my left hand, I placed the eggs in it and packed them round with a little moss.

As I went down the ravine the banks became higher, and sixty yards from where I had entered it I came on a deep drop of some twelve to fourteen feet. The water that rushes down all these hill ravines in the rains had worn the rock as smooth as glass, and as it was too steep to offer a foothold I handed the rifle to the men and, sitting on the edge, proceeded to slide down. My feet had hardly touched the sandy bottom when the two men, with a flying leap, landed one on either side of me, and thrusting the rifle into my hand asked in a very agitated manner if I had heard the tiger. As a matter of fact I had heard nothing, possibly due to the scraping of my clothes on the rocks, and, when questioned, the men said that what they had heard was a deep-throated growl from somewhere close at hand, but exactly from which direction the sound had come they were unable to say. Tigers do not betray their presence by growling when looking for their dinner, and the only (and

very unsatisfactory) explanation I can offer is that the tigress followed us after we left the open ground, and on seeing that we were going down the ravine had gone ahead and taken up a position where the ravine narrowed to half its width; and that when she was on the point of springing out on me, I had disappeared out of sight down the slide and she had involuntarily given vent to her disappointment with a low growl. Not a satisfactory reason, unless one assumes—without any reason—that she had selected me for her dinner, and therefore had no interest in the two men.

Where the three of us now stood in a bunch we had the smooth, steep rock behind us, to our right a wall of rock slightly leaning over the ravine and fifteen feet high, and to our left a tumbled bank of big rocks thirty or forty feet high. The sandy bed of the ravine, on which we were standing, was roughly forty feet long and ten feet wide. At the lower end of this sandy bed a great pine tree had fallen across, damming the ravine, and the collection of sand was due to this dam. The wall of overhanging rock came to an end twelve or fifteen feet from the fallen tree, and as I approached the end of the rock, my feet making no sound on the sand, I very fortunately noticed that the sandy bed continued round to the back of the rock.

This rock, about which I have said so much, I can best describe as a giant school slate, two feet thick at its lower end, and standing up—not quite perpendicularly—on one of its long sides.

As I stepped clear of this giant slate, I looked behind me over my right shoulder and—looked straight into the tigress's face.

I would like you to have a clear picture of the situation.

The sandy bed behind the rock was quite flat. To the right of it was the smooth slate fifteen feet high and leaning slightly outwards, to the left of it was a scoured-out steep bank also some fifteen feet high, overhung by a dense tangle of thorn bushes, while at the far end was a slide similar to, but a little higher than, the one I had glissaded¹ down. The sandy bed, enclosed by these three natural walls, was about twenty feet long and half as wide, and lying on it, with her fore-paws stretched out and her hind legs well tucked under her, was the tigress. Her head, which was raised a few inches off her paws, was eight feet (measured later) from me, and on her face was a smile similar to that one sees on the face of a dog welcoming his master home after a long absence.

Two thoughts flashed through my mind: one, that it was up to me to make the first move, and the other that the move would have to be made in such a manner as not to alarm the tigress or make her nervous.

The rifle was in my right hand held diagonally across my chest, with the safety-catch off, and in order to get it to bear on the tigress the muzzle would have to be swung round three-quarters of a circle.

The movements of swinging round the rifle, with one hand, was begun very slowly and hardly perceptibly, and when a quarter of a circle had been made, the stock came in contact with my right side. It was now necessary to extend my arm, and as the stock cleared my side, the swing was very slowly continued. My arm was now at full stretch and the weight of the rifle was

¹ Slid.

beginning to tell. Only a little further now for the muzzle to go, and the tigress—who had not once taken her eyes off mine—was still looking up at me, with the pleased expression still on her face.

How long it took the rifle to make the three-quarter circle I am not in a position to say. To me, looking into the tigress's eyes and unable therefore to follow the movement of the barrel, it appeared that my arm was paralysed, and that the swing would never be completed. However, the movement was completed at last, and as soon as the rifle was pointing at the tigress's body, I pressed the trigger.

I heard the report, exaggerated in that restricted space, and felt the jar of the recoil, and but for these tangible proofs that the rifle had gone off I might, for all the immediate result the shot produced, have been in the grip of one of those awful nightmares in which triggers are vainly pulled of rifles that refuse to be discharged at the critical moment.

For a perceptible fraction of time the tigress remained perfectly still, and then, very slowly, her head sank on to her outstretched paws, while at the same time a jet of blood issued from the bullet-hole. The bullet had injured her spine and shattered the upper portion of her heart.

The two men who were following a few yards behind me and who were separated from the tigress by the thickness of the rock, came to a halt when they saw me stop and turn my head. They knew instinctively that I had seen the tigress and judged from my behaviour that she was close at hand, and Madho Singh said afterwards that he wanted to call out and tell me to

drop the eggs and get both hands on the rifle. When I had fired my shot and lowered the point of the rifle on to my toes, Madho Singh, at a sign, came forward to relieve me of it, for very suddenly my legs appeared to be unable to support me, so I made for the fallen tree and sat down. Even before looking at the pads of her feet I knew it was the Chowgarh tigress I had sent to the Happy Hunting Grounds, and that the shears that had assisted her to cut the threads of sixty-four human lives—the people of the district put the number at twice the figure—had, while the game was in her hands, turned, and cut the thread of her own life.

Three things, each of which would appear to you to have been to my disadvantage, were actually in my favour. These were (*a*) the eggs in my left hand, (*b*) the light rifle I was carrying, and (*c*) the tiger being a man-eater. If I had not had the eggs in my hand I should have had both hands on the rifle, and when I looked back and saw the tiger at such close quarters I should instinctively have tried to swing round to face her, and the spring that was arrested by my lack of movement would inevitably have been launched. Again, if the rifle had not been a light one it would not have been possible for me to have moved it in the way it was imperative I should move it, and then discharge it at the full extent of my arm. And lastly, if the tiger had been just an ordinary tiger, and not a man-eater, it would on finding itself cornered have made for the opening and wiped me out of the way; and to be wiped out of the way by a tiger usually has fatal results.

While the men made a detour and went up the hill to free the buffalo and secure the rope, which was

needed for another and more pleasant purpose, I climbed over the rocks and went up the ravine to restore the eggs to their rightful owner. I plead guilty to being as superstitious as my brother sportsmen. For three long periods, extending over a whole year, I had tried—and tried hard—to get a shot at the tigress, and had failed; and now within a few minutes of having picked up the eggs my luck had changed.

The eggs, which all this time had remained safely in the hollow of my left hand, were still warm when I replaced them in the little depression in the rock that did duty as a nest, and when I again passed that way half an hour later, they had vanished under the brooding mother whose colouring so exactly matched the mottled rock that it was difficult for me, who knew the exact spot where the nest was situated, to distinguish her from her surroundings.

JIM CORBETT,
Man-Eaters of Kumaon

AMONG THE HEAD-HUNTERS

The Flying Carpet, by Richard Halliburton, is a modern story of high-speed adventure in which he and his pilot, Moye Stephens, set out to fly to places they had dreamed about and read about but had never seen. They had no set route, no set plan, but went wherever their fancies dictated. As a result they often found themselves in strange situations in out-of-the-way corners of the earth. In Timbuctoo, almost legendary city of Africa, they bought two slaves and then had to pay the original vendor to take them back; they lived for a time with the Foreign Legion, and marched with them across the desert; in Persia they arranged to have themselves arrested so that they could experience life in prison. In India they flew among the incredible heights of the Himalayas close to Everest. Finally they went to Borneo, land of the Dyaks, and for a short time lived among the head-hunters of Sarawak.

Richard Halliburton lost his life in 1939 while trying to cross the Pacific in a Chinese junk. He had already covered fifteen hundred miles, and then all contact with the outside world ceased. Probably the junk capsized in a violent storm.

My first encounter with Wild Men of Borneo came some years before this visit to their native island. It happened in Berlin, where I was visiting a circus sideshow. The Wild Men were on exhibition—dark brown, almost black, skin: clothed only in a loin-cloth, and decorated with red paint on their faces and wild-boars' tusks around their necks and ankles. They were in an iron cage, before which a large crowd, fascinated by such ferocious and dangerous savages, stood and stared. As curious as anyone, I pressed close to get a good look at the exhibits, and as I did so, I overheard this Bornean conversation:

"Sho' is hot," one savage said to the other.

"Sho' is!"

They were perfectly good Mississippi negroes, making an easy living by this great impersonation.

My faith in Wild Men was considerably shaken by such disillusioning experience. I wondered if, when we landed at the Dyak long-house we were headed for, the chief was going to greet me with "Good mornin', suh! Ain't that airyplane *sump'm*!"

Our objective was marked clearly on a huge chart I had before me in the cockpit. The chart had been given to us by the Ranee, after the officials who best knew the interior had indicated on it the long-house chosen for us to visit, on the Rejang River at a point two hundred miles from the sea—a long-house ruled by one of the greatest Dyak chiefs in Sarawak.

There were other reasons, too, why this house had been recommended: besides being one of the greatest Dyak communities it was also one of the most remote from civilization—very near the heart of the island.

And yet, the Rejang River and its tributaries connected it directly with the sea. We could follow this river as a guiding thread and come down in smooth water at almost any point. If anything went wrong with the flying mechanics of our plane, we would be able to float the entire two hundred miles back to the coast.

The Headman of the district, Chief Koh, made this particular long-house his capital. He was a great favourite with the Rajah and the Ranee, despite the fact that he had been to Kuching only once in his life. The Ranee had urged us to visit him in order not only to meet the native ruler best able to show us Dyak life in its richest and most unspoiled form, but also to present ourselves as good-will ambassadors bearing a gift from the Throne.

From Kuching, with our pontoons and propeller properly mended, we had sailed up the coast a hundred miles, come to the estuary of the Rejang, and turned up this enormous river—a river pouring into the China Sea a volume of water as great as the Mississippi.

For another hundred miles this vast yellow flood twisted and turned as if trying to shake us loose: but we made every effort not to be shaken, for on either side stretched jungle as dense and as hostile as any in the world. The banks were the home of countless giant crocodiles. The pythons waited in the trees above the waterside for the wild pigs to come to drink; and the orang-outangs, big as men, ruled as undisputed kings throughout this kingdom of swamps and trees.

At rare intervals we noticed long-houses beside the river, and an occasional government post ornamented by a log fort.

During the second hundred miles, the river narrowed greatly and ran more swiftly as we approached the highlands. We watched carefully for every fork and landmark, to keep our exact position clear on the chart.

Guided by that chart, we came at length to the post called Kapit, and, according to instructions from the Ranee, landed there to make the acquaintance of the district Resident, a young Englishman. Official letters requested him to follow us to Chief Koh's long-house, to act as escort and interpreter. It was agreed we should depart next morning, and that as soon as he saw we had escaped the dangerous floating logs and were on our way, he would follow as quickly as possible in his motor-dugout, arriving at the long-house perhaps six hours later than we.

Starting off again, at the appointed time, we flew for another twenty minutes across jungle penetrable only *via* the river. This river-route would take the Resident and his servants, in the most modern conveyance in Central Borneo, twenty times as long as it was taking us.

Amid such a sea of tree-tops, the clearing on the river bank around our particular long-house destination marked it before we got there. Just above the clearing we selected a broad smooth patch of water where two rivers joined—an ideal place to alight.

But first we would announce ourselves by diving wide-open at the long-house!

In all the history of Borneo, there was probably never such excitement, such consternation, as prevailed inside that house. Its three hundred Dyak inmates rushed out upon the front veranda-like platform that extended the entire length of the building, and darted about in

complete panic, supposing no doubt that the shrieking demoniac bird had come to devour them. Some leaped to the ground and fled into the jungle. Others seized their babies and hid underneath the house. There was pandemonium.

We had hoped that our arrival might bring these jungle people some entertainment, and were sorry that our first appearance had frightened them half to death instead.

So, desisting, we landed on the river and anchored in shallow water.

Not a soul appeared.

How were we going to get ashore? The river was too full of crocodiles to risk swimming: and anyway, there were no banks to swim to—just a border of half-drowned branches of trees. Taxying around to the long-house in the hope of attracting a boat seemed unwise, for we did not know what hidden rocks the water might conceal. There seemed nothing to do but wait six hours for our friend the English Resident to overtake us.

Then, just as we were resigning ourselves to spending half a day on our pontoons, a dugout appeared around the bend, manned by an extraordinarily fine-looking young Dyak. He wore only the usual red cotton cloth, wrapped tightly about his loins. His trim muscular body, shining in the sun and extravagantly tattooed on arms and legs, made a perfect picture of natural grace and strength. Thick, straight, jet-black hair hung in bands across his forehead and down his back to his waist. From each ear dangled a heavy gold ring, suspended from long slits in his ear-lobes. And around his wrists were dozens of black grass bracelets.

Paddling at full speed, he came toward us, shouting

and smiling. He drew alongside our pontoons and shook our hands, talking excitedly in Dyak and trying desperately, with gesticulations, to make us understand that we were welcome. He explained—and we understood quite clearly enough—that everybody else had fled to the jungle, but that he had been not only to Kuching, but even to “Singapura,” and had seen a “be-loon” (balloon, meaning an airplane) fly there. *He* knew what we were, but nobody had given him time to explain.

Moye and I embarked in his dugout, paddled to the long-house and climbed the ladder from the water’s edge up to the front platform. Peering timidly around corners at the extreme end of the house, a handful of Dyaks reappeared. Our escort shouted at them to come and meet us—we were only *Tuans*¹ like the Resident, come in a be-loon to visit them.

Little by little, like wild forest animals, the Dyaks began to gather closer, shyly at first, but with increasing courage and increasing numbers, until presently three hundred brown bodies were swarming toward us from the jungle, from the branches, from the hillside above. It finally became a race to reach us—and the naked little children, agile as squirrels, got there first.

We looked about curiously at our new friends. They were all full-blooded Dyaks—surprisingly small, but surprisingly beautiful. The men were dressed uniformly in red loin-cloths and narrow aprons, heavy anklets and wristlets of twisted grass. The women were dressed as simply—bare from the waist up, with their hips wrapped in a single cotton cloth. A few of them wore high

¹ Lords or masters.

corsets made of rattan hoops wrapped in copper wire, fitting snugly around their waists. They wore their hair pulled back and tied in a knot. All the men, on the other hand, allowed theirs to fall freely down their backs. It not infrequently reached their knees. Everybody was adorned with the same tattoo, always dark blue in colour, we had noticed on the young man in the dugout.

What agreeable faces! True, all the noses had flat bridges, and the eyes had a slight Mongolian slant, but in their glance were quick intelligence and appealing kindness.

But what gave them all such a surprised expression? . . . It was their eyebrows and eyelashes—there *weren't* any. Every eyelash and eyebrow had been pulled out. Only the smallest girls were still unplucked.

We could not help observing their teeth as they crowded around us, now talking and laughing. Each mouth was black from betel-nut: each tooth had been filed down almost to the gums. Only the black stumps remained, or in some cases, among what was obviously the better class, to these stumps were fixed bright brass teeth. (Any dog can have white teeth, but only rich people can have beautiful brass ones!) It seems hard to believe that these disfigurements would not completely wreck their appearance. But despite all their efforts to mar themselves they still remained strikingly handsome. Such physiques did not need eyebrows or teeth to compel admiration.

From out of the dense ring around us an especially fine figure of a man, probably fifty years old, emerged to greet us. Grey hair—deep chest—powerful arms and

legs—and a face that was as noble and as full of character as any face I've ever seen. It had firmness about the mouth, but good humour in the wide-set eyes. This Dyak would have commanded attention and respect any place in the world.

He was Chief Koh. The young man who had first come to welcome us was his son, Jugah.

Into their hands we now put ourselves and, followed by a small mob, were shown about the long-house.

A Bornean long-house is a community dwelling, always erected lengthwise along a river bank. The rear half is given over to a long row of cubicles, one for each family, all of which open upon the front half, which consists of one long, unpartitioned public gallery that extends from end to end of the building and forms a sort of covered Main Street. In the case of Chief Koh's house this gallery was thirty feet wide and fully six hundred feet long. Here the children play, the mats are woven, the rice is winnowed, the drums and the blow-pipes and the spears are kept; all community life takes place here. And from the rafters of this gallery the smoked human heads, trophies of the tribe's prowess in war, hang in hundreds.

We noticed that our entire house was lifted some twenty feet off the ground on poles. The space below the house was used for the pig-pens and chicken coops, and as a general receptacle for all the refuse. Our long-house was not a model of sanitation, but that did not keep it from being an amazing structure nevertheless, considering its colossal size and the skilled craftsmanship that had taken the reeds and trees from the jungle, and with the crudest of implements—without

bricks or stone, without saws or nails—fashioned a co-operative apartment that sheltered three hundred people and contained all the requirements of their village life.

That afternoon, the Resident overtook us. He spoke Dyak like a native, and proved fully informed about this interesting and attractive race.

At sunset, Moye and I, having learned that the depth of the water permitted, taxied the Flying Carpet up to the crude dock before the long-house. This gave the entire population of the place all the chance they wanted to inspect the monster.

Old Chief Koh stood on the bank and gazed with consuming curiosity at the winged demon. He turned to the Resident and asked several earnest questions relative to our plane.

“Is it a bird?” he inquired. Everything that flies in the air must be a bird. “Does it lay eggs?”

“Yes,” I said, through the interpreter, when he told me about Koh’s questions. “It is a magic bird. But it will fly only for a special magic-maker, and only when it is roaring. If allowed, the bird will hurl itself to the ground in order to destroy anyone riding upon it. Yes—this bird can lay eggs, too—*iron* eggs. They are always laid while flying, and wherever they fall, they explode with a terrible roar and demolish everything in sight. When you wish to destroy your enemy’s long-house, you just make this bird fly overhead and lay an egg, which falls down on the roof and blows it up.”

Chief Koh listened with open mouth, but Jugah wouldn’t believe a word of it. He knew it wasn’t a bird at all. It was a *be-loon*.

Chief Koh's intense interest in our magic vehicle was not without an ulterior motive. He took the Resident aside, and asked him if it might be possible for us to fly over the long-house of the mountain Dyaks, fifty miles farther inland, with whom he'd been having no end of trouble—and lay an egg on the rival chief. The Resident was horrified. After all these years of pacification, old Koh's foremost thought was still the destruction of his neighbours. The Resident excused us by pointing out that the exploding eggs would smash the enemies' heads to bits, and make them useless as trophies.

Koh's request, however, gave the Resident what he thought was a much better idea—What a grand spectacle it would be for all the tribesmen if their chief could be persuaded to go for a ride! . . . but not immediately—not until he could collect his sub-chiefs and their retainers to watch.

Moye and I naturally responded to the idea. We'd play it up, prepare the stage, make his flight an event that would go down in Dyak history, make it an impressive honour bestowed in the name of the Rajah's government at Kuching.

The Resident announced this plan to Koh and explained that it would give him prestige beyond calculation. It would also bring to the tribe as much glory as a successful head-hunting war. But Koh was dubious. This seemed like invading the realm of the gods and the demons. To give him courage, Moye led him on to the pontoons, and into the front cockpit, and tried to explain that it really wasn't dangerous at all.

Moved chiefly by his pride, he finally agreed to fly.

And that very night, he instructed messengers to go into the tributary rivers, carrying the fantastic story of the magic bird to all the other tribal long-houses and their subsidiary chiefs. These chiefs must be summoned to appear three days hence, in the morning, to meet the magic bird that laid iron eggs, and to behold their great *Penghulu* carried up into the clouds and brought home again by this same monster. It was to be a very great event. They must wear all their best feather headdresses and all their silver jewellery, and bring their swords and shields, and come in the war-boats with as many followers as possible.

From the dock where the Flying Carpet was tied, a dozen dugouts, each manned by two paddlers, pushed off to spread the news throughout Chief Koh's territory.

RICHARD HALLIBURTON,
The Flying Carpet

ESCAPE FROM FAMINE

[WANG LUNG has taken his wife and young family away to the south of China; farther north there was widespread famine. They had sacrificed everything to keep alive, even the faithful ox that did their ploughing. Even so, one of the children died. Here in the south there was food. The old man is Wang Lung's father; the Chinese venerate their parents. Wang Lung finds work pulling a rickshaw until such times as he can return north to his lands to resume farming. He loves the good earth. To leave it to travel far south, to change his whole mode of life, was adventure enough for him. Later he was able to return home, to farm successfully, and to become rich.]

WITH his two pieces of silver Wang Lung paid for a hundred miles of road, and the officer who took his silver from him gave him back a handful of copper pence, and with a few of these Wang Lung bought from a vendor, who thrust his tray of wares in at a hole in the wagon as soon as it stopped, four small loaves of bread and a bowl of soft rice for the girl. It was more than they had had to eat at one time for many days, and although they were starved for food, when it was in their mouths desire left them and it was only by coaxing that the boys could be made to swallow. But

the old man sucked [perseveringly] at the bread between his toothless gums.

“One must eat,” he cackled forth, very friendly to all who pressed about him as the fire-wagon rolled and rocked on its way. “I do not care that my foolish belly is grown lazy after all these days of little to do. It must be fed. I will not die because it does not wish to work.” [And men laughed suddenly at the smiling, wizened, little old man, whose sparse white beard was scattered all over his chin.]

But not all the copper pence did Wang Lung spend on food. He kept back all he was able to buy mats to build a shed for them when they reached the south. There were men and women in the fire-wagon who had been south in other years; some who went each year to the rich cities of the south to work and to beg and thus save the price of food. And Wang Lung, when he had grown used to the wonder of where he was and to the astonishment of seeing the land whirl by the holes in the wagon, listened to what these men said. They spoke with the loudness of wisdom where others are ignorant.

“First you must buy six mats,” said one, a man with coarse, hanging lips like a camel’s mouth. “These are two pence for one mat, if you are wise and do not act like a country bumpkin, in which case you will be charged three pence, which is more than is necessary, as I very well know. I cannot be fooled by the men in the southern cities, even if they are rich.” He wagged his head and looked about for admiration. Wang Lung listened anxiously.

“And then?” he urged. He sat squatting [upon his haunches] on the bottom of the wagon, which was, after

all, only an empty room made of wood, with nothing to sit upon and the wind and the dust flying up through the cracks in the floor.

"Then," said the man more loudly still, raising his voice above the din of the iron wheels beneath them, "then you bind these together into a hut and then you go out to beg, first smearing yourself with mud [and filth] to make yourselves as piteous as you can."

Now Wang Lung had never in his life begged of any man and he disliked this notion of begging of strange people in the south.

"One must beg?" he repeated.

"Ah, indeed," said the coarse-mouthed man, "but not until you have eaten. These people in the south have so much rice that each morning you may go to a public kitchen and for a penny hold as much as you can in your belly of the white rice gruel. Then you can beg comfortably and buy bean-curd and cabbage and garlic."

Wang Lung withdrew a little from the others and turned himself about to the wall and secretly with his hand in his girdle he counted out the pence he had left. There was enough for the six mats and enough each for a penny for rice and beyond that he had three pence left. It came over him with comfort that thus they could begin the new life. But the notion of holding up a bowl and begging of anyone who passed continued to distress him. It was very well for the old man and for the children and even for the woman, but he had his two hands.

"Is there no work for a man's hands?" he asked of the man suddenly, turning about.

“Aye, work!” said the man with contempt, and he spat upon the floor. “You can pull a rich man in a yellow rickshaw if you like, and sweat your blood out with heat as you run and have your sweat freeze into a coat of ice on you when you stand waiting to be called. Give me begging!” [And he cursed a round curse, so that Wang Lung would not ask anything of him further.]

[But still] it was a good thing that he had heard what the man said, for when the fire-wagon had carried them as far as it would and had turned them out upon the ground, Wang Lung had ready a plan and he set the old man and the children against a long, grey wall of a house, which stood there, and he told the woman to watch them, and he went off to buy the mats, asking of this one and that where the market streets lay. At first he could scarcely understand what was said to him, so brittle and sharp was the sound which these southerners made when they spoke, and several times when he asked and they did not understand, they were impatient, and he learned to observe what sort of man he asked of and to choose one with a kindlier face, for these southerners had tempers which were quick and easily ruffled.

But he found the mat shop at last on the edge of the city and he put his pennies down upon the counter as one who knew the price of the goods and he carried away his roll of mats. When he returned to the spot where he had left the others, they stood there waiting, although when he came the boys cried out at him in relief, and he saw that they had been filled with terror in this strange place. Only the old man watched

everything with pleasure and astonishment and he murmured at Wang Lung:

"You see how fat they all are, these southerners, and how pale and oily are their skins. They eat pork every day, doubtless."

But none who passed looked at Wang Lung and his family. Men came and went along the cobbled highway to the city, busy and intent and never glancing aside at beggars, and every little while a caravan of donkeys came pattering by, their small feet fitting neatly to the stones, and they were laden with baskets of brick for the building of houses and with great bags of grain crossed upon their swaying backs. At the end of each caravan the driver rode on the hindmost beast, and he carried a great whip, and this whip he cracked with a terrific noise over the backs of the beasts, shouting as he did so. And as he passed Wang Lung each driver gave him a scornful and haughty look, and no prince could have looked more haughty than these drivers in their rough work coats as they passed by the small group of persons, standing wondering at the edge of the roadway. It was the especial pleasure of each driver, seeing how strange Wang Lung and his family were, to crack his whip just as he passed them, and the sharp explosive cut of the air made them leap up, and seeing them leap the drivers guffawed, and Wang Lung was angry when this happened two and three times and he turned away to see where he could put his hut.

There were already other huts clinging to the wall behind them, but what was inside the wall none knew and there was no way of knowing. It stretched out long and grey and very high, and against the base the small

mat sheds clung like fleas to a dog's back. Wang Lung observed the huts and he began to shape his own mats this way and that, but they were stiff and clumsy things at best, being made of split reeds, and he despaired, when suddenly O-lan said:

"That I can do. I remember it in my childhood."

And she placed the girl upon the ground and pulled the mats thus and thus, and shaped a rounded roof reaching to the ground and high enough for a man to sit under and not strike the top, and upon the edges of the mats that were upon the ground she placed bricks that were lying about and she set the boys to picking up more bricks. When it was finished they went within and with one mat she had contrived not to use they made a floor and sat down and were sheltered.

Sitting thus and looking at each other, it seemed less than possible that the day before they had left their own house and their land and that these were now a hundred miles away. It was a distance vast enough to have taken them weeks of walking and at which they must have died, some of them, before it was done.

Then the general feeling of plenty in this rich land, where no one seemed even hungered, filled them, and when Wang Lung said, "Let us go and seek the public kitchens," they rose up almost cheerfully and went out once more, and this time the small boys clattered their chopsticks against their bowls as they walked, for there would soon be something to put into them. And they found soon why the huts were built to that long wall, for a short distance beyond the northern end of it was a street and along the street many people walked carrying bowls and buckets and vessels of tin, all empty, and

these persons were going to the kitchens for the poor, which were at the end of the street and not far away. And so Wang Lung and his family mingled with these others and with them they came at last to two great buildings made of mats, and every one crowded into the open end of these buildings.

Now in the rear of each building were earthen stoves, but larger than Wang Lung had ever seen, and on them iron cauldrons as big as small ponds; and when the great wooden lids were pried up, there was the good white rice bubbling and boiling, and clouds of fragrant steam rose up. Now when the people smelled this fragrance of rice it was the sweetest in the world to their nostrils, and they all pressed forward in a great mass and people called out and mothers shouted in anger and fear lest their children be trodden upon and little babies cried, and the men who opened the cauldron roared forth:

“Now there is enough for every man and each in his turn!”

But nothing could stop the mass of hungry men and women and they fought like beasts until all were fed. Wang Lung, caught in their midst, could do nothing but cling to his father and his two sons and when he was swept to the great cauldron he held out his bowl and when it was filled threw down his pence, and it was all he could do to stand sturdily and not be swept on before the thing was done.

Then, when they had come to the street again and stood eating their rice, he ate and was filled and there was a little left in his bowl, and he said:

“I will take this home to eat in the evening.”

But a man stood near who was some sort of a guard of the place for he wore a special garment of blue and red, and he said sharply:

“No, and you can take nothing away except what is in your belly.” [And Wang Lung marvelled at this and said:]

“Well, if I have paid my penny what business is it of yours if I carry it within or without me?”

The man said then:

“We must have this rule, for there are those whose hearts are so hard that they will come and buy this rice that is given for the poor—for a penny will not feed any man like this—and they will carry the rice home to feed to their pigs for slop. And the rice is for men and not for pigs.”

Wang Lung listened to this in astonishment and he cried:

“Are there men as hard as this!” And then he said, “But why should any give like this to the poor, and who is it that gives?”

The man answered then:

“It is the rich and the gentry of the town who do it, and some do it for a good deed for the future, that by saving lives they may get merit in heaven, and some do it for righteousness that men may speak well of them.”

“Nevertheless it is a good deed for whatever reason,” said Wang Lung, “and some must do it out of a good heart.” [And then seeing that the man did not answer him, he added in his own defence, “At least there are a few of these?”]

But the man was weary of speaking with him and he turned his back, and he hummed an idle tune.] The

children tugged at Wang Lung then, and Wang Lung led them all back to the hut they had made, and there they laid themselves down and they slept until the next morning, for it was the first time since summer they had been filled with food, and sleep overcame them with fullness.

PEARL S. BUCK,
The Good Earth

SIX MEN, ONE RAFT—AND SHARKS!

IN the centre of the great Pacific Ocean lie the islands of Polynesia. Scientists have long wondered how the first inhabitants reached these islands in the waste of waters over three thousand miles from the nearest continent.

Thor Heyerdahl, a young Norwegian scientist, put forward a theory that they came from the mainland of South America, but other scientists said that this was impossible, as the primitive native boats or rafts could not possibly sail across so many miles of sea.

However, Heyerdahl determined to test his theory, and constructed, of balsa wood, a raft which was a replica (as nearly as possible) of those used by the natives centuries previously.

With five companions and a parrot he set himself adrift on the Pacific. For one hundred and one days they drifted at the mercy of wind and current, finally being wrecked on one of the Polynesian islands four thousand three hundred miles from where they started. During their voyage they had many exciting and thrilling experiences, particularly with the numerous sharks that followed their raft, but so familiar did they become with these terrifying fish that they actually succeeded in catching them with their bare hands.

The account which follows gives a vivid picture of their everyday life aboard the raft in the middle of the ocean, and also tells of the sad day when they lost their parrot and the grim lesson it taught them.

WE had no longer the same respect for waves and sea. We knew them and their relationship to us on the raft. Even the shark had become a part of the everyday picture; we knew it and its usual reactions. We no longer thought of the hand harpoon, and we did not even move away from the side of the raft if a shark came up alongside us. On the contrary, we were more likely to try and grasp its back fin as it glided unperturbed along the logs. This finally developed into a quite new form of sport, tug-of-war with shark without a line.

We began quite modestly. We caught all too easily more dolphins than we could eat. To keep a popular form of amusement going without wasting food, we hit on comic fishing without a hook, for the mutual entertainment of the dolphins and ourselves. We fastened unused flying fish to a string and drew them over the surface of the water. The dolphins shot up to the surface and seized the fish, and then we tugged, each in our own direction, and had a fine circus performance, for if one dolphin let go another came in its place. We had fun, and the dolphins got the fish in the end.

Then we started the same game with the sharks. We had either a bit of fish on the end of a rope or often a bag with scraps from dinner which we let out on a line. Instead of turning on his back, the shark pushed his snout above the water and swam forward with jaws wide to swallow the morsel. We could not help pulling on the rope just as the shark was going to close his jaws again, and the cheated shark swam on with an unspeakably foolish, patient expression and opened its jaws again for the offal which jumped out of its mouth

every time it tried to swallow it. It ended by the shark coming right up to the logs and jumping up like a begging dog for the food which hung dangling in a bag above its nose. It was just like feeding a gaping hippopotamus in a zoological garden, and one day at the end of July, after three months on board the raft, the following entry was made in the diary:

We made friends with the shark which followed us to-day. At dinner we fed it with scraps which we poured right down into its open jaws. It has the effect of a half fierce, half good-natured, and friendly dog when it swims alongside us. It cannot be denied that sharks can seem quite pleasant so long as we do not get into their jaws ourselves. At least we find it amusing to have them about us, except when we are bathing.

One day a bamboo stick, with a bag of sharks' food tied to a string, was lying ready for use on the edge of the raft when a sea came and washed it all overboard. The bamboo stick was already lying afloat a couple of hundred yards astern of the raft, when it suddenly rose upright in the water and came rushing after the raft by itself, as if intending to put itself nicely back in its place again. When the fishing-rod came swaying nearer us, we saw a ten-foot shark swimming right under it, while the bamboo stick stuck up out of the waves like a periscope. The shark had swallowed the food-bag without biting off the line. The fishing-rod soon overtook us, passed us quite quietly and vanished ahead.

Even if we gradually came to look upon the shark with quite other eyes, our respect for the five or six rows of razor-sharp teeth which lay in ambush in the huge jaws never disappeared.

One day Knut had an involuntary swim in company with a shark. No one was ever allowed to swim away from the raft, both on account of the raft's drift and because of sharks. But one day it was extra quiet and we had just pulled on board such sharks as had been following us, so permission was given for a quick dip in the sea. Knut plunged in and had gone quite a long way before he came up to the surface to crawl back. At that moment we saw from the mast a shadow bigger than himself coming up behind him, deeper down. We shouted warnings as quietly as we could so as not to create a panic, and Knut heaved himself towards the side of the raft. But the shadow below belonged to a still better swimmer, which shot up from the depths and gained on Knut. They reached the raft at the same time. While Knut was clambering on board, a six-foot shark glided past right under his stomach and stopped beside the raft. We gave it a dainty dolphin's head to thank it for not having snapped.

Generally it is smell more than sight which excites sharks' voracity. We have sat with our legs in the water to test them, and they have swum towards us till they were two or three feet away, only quietly to turn their tails towards us again. But if the water was in the least bloodstained, as it was when we had been cleaning fish, the sharks' fins came to life, and they would suddenly collect like bluebottles from a long way off. If we flung out shark's guts, they simply went mad and dashed about in a blind frenzy. They savagely devoured the liver of their own kind, and even dug their teeth into the logs where the food had been. There are

sharks and sharks, because the shark is completely at the mercy of his own emotions.

The last stage in our intercourse with sharks was that we began to pull their tails. Pulling animals' tails is held to be an inferior form of sport, but that may be because no one has tried it on a shark. For it was in truth a lively form of sport.

To get hold of a shark by the tail we first had to give it a real tit-bit. It was ready to stick its head high out of the water to get it. Usually it had its food served dangling in a bag. For if one has fed a shark directly by hand once, it is not longer amusing. If one feeds dogs or tame bears by hand they set their teeth into the meat and tear and worry until they get a bit off, or until they get the whole piece for themselves. But if one holds out a large dolphin at a safe distance from the shark's head, the shark comes up and smacks his jaws together, and without one having felt any tug half the dolphin is suddenly gone, and one is left sitting with a tail in one's hand. We had had a hard job ourselves to cut the dolphin in two with knives, but in a fraction of a second the shark, moving its triangular sawteeth quickly sideways, had imperceptibly chewed up the backbone and everything else like a sausage machine. When the shark turned quietly to go under again, its tail flickered up above the surface and was easy to grasp. The shark's skin was just like sand-paper to hold on to, and inside the upper point of its tail there was an indentation which might have been made to allow of a good grip. If we once got a firm grasp there, there was no chance of our grip not holding. Then we had to give a jerk before the shark could collect itself, and get

as much as possible of the tail pulled in tight over the logs. For a second or two the shark understood nothing, but then it began to wriggle and struggle in a spiritless manner with the fore part of its body, for without the help of its tail a shark cannot get up any speed. The other fins are only apparatus for balancing and steering. After a few desperate jerks, during which we had to keep a tight hold of the tail, the surprised shark became quite crestfallen and apathetic, and as the loose stomach began to sink down towards the head the shark at last became completely paralysed. When the shark had become quiet and, as it were, hung stiff awaiting developments, it was time for us to haul in with all our might. We seldom got more than half the heavy fish up out of the water, but then the shark woke up and did the rest itself. With violent jerks it swung its head round and up on to the logs, and then we had to tug with all our might and jump well out of the way, and that pretty quickly if we wanted to save our legs. For now the shark was in no kindly mood. Jerking itself round in great leaps, it thrashed at the bamboo wall, using its tail like a sledge-hammer. Now it no longer spared its iron muscles. The huge jaws were opened wide, and the rows of teeth bit and snapped in the air for anything they could reach. It might happen that the war dance ended in the shark more or less involuntarily tumbling overboard and disappearing for good after its shameful humiliation, but most often it flung itself about at random on the same logs aft, till we got a running noose round the root of its tail, or till it had ceased to gnash its devilish teeth for ever.

The parrot was quite thrilled when we had a shark

on deck. It came scurrying out of the bamboo cabin and climbed up the wall at frantic speed till it found itself a good safe look-out post on the palm-leaf roof, and there it sat shaking its head, or fluttered to and fro along the ridge, shrieking with excitement. It had at an early date become an excellent sailor, and was always bubbling over with humour and laughter. We reckoned ourselves as seven on board, us six and the green parrot. The crab Johannes had after all to reconcile himself to being regarded as a cold-blooded appendage. At night the parrot crept into its cage under the roof of the bamboo cabin but in the daytime it strutted about the deck, or hung on to guy-ropes and stays and did the most fascinating acrobatic exercises. To begin with we had turnbuckles¹ on the stays of the mast, but they wore the ropes, so we replaced them by ordinary running knots. When the stays stretched and grew slack from sun and wind, all hands had to turn to and brace up the mast, so that the mangrove-wood masts, as heavy as iron, should not bump against and cut into the ropes till they fell down. And while we were hauling and pulling, at the most critical moment, the parrot began to call out with his cracked voice: "Haul! Haul! ho, ho, ho, ha, ha, ha!" And if it made us laugh, it laughed till it shook at its own amusingness and swung round and round on the stays.

To begin with the parrot was inimical to our wireless operators. They might be sitting happily absorbed in the wireless corner with their magic earphones on, and perhaps in contact with a wireless fan in Oklahoma. Then their earphones would suddenly go dead, and they

¹ Thin, flat bars used for fastening.

could not get a sound however much they coaxed the wires and turned the knobs. The parrot had been busy and bitten off the wire of the aerial. This was specially popular in the early days, when the wire of the aerial stretched upwards attached to a balloon. But one day the parrot became seriously ill. It sat in its cage and moped, and touched no food for two days, while its droppings glittered with golden scraps of aerial. Then the wireless operators repented of their angry words and the parrot its misdeeds, and from that day Torstein and Knut were its chosen friends, and the parrot would never sleep anywhere but in the wireless corner. The parrot's mother tongue was Spanish when it first came on board, and Bengt declared that it took to talking Spanish with a Norwegian accent, long before it began to imitate Torstein's favourite ejaculations in full-blooded Norwegian.

We enjoyed the parrot's humour and brilliant colours for two months, until a big sea came on board from astern while it was on its way down from the masthead. When we discovered that the parrot had gone overboard, it was too late. We did not see it. And the *Kon-Tiki* could not be turned or stopped; if anything went overboard from the raft we had no chance of turning back for it—numerous experiences had shown that.

The loss of the parrot had a depressing effect on our spirits the first evening; we knew that exactly the same thing would happen to ourselves if we fell overboard on a solitary night watch.

We tightened up all the safety regulations, brought into use new life-lines for the night watch, and frightened

one another out of believing that we were safe because things had gone well in the first two months. One careless step, one thoughtless movement, could send us where the green parrot had gone, even in broad daylight.

THOR HEYERDAHL,
The Kon-Tiki Expedition

THE LAST MARCH

THE tragic but victorious story of Captain Scott's last expedition will never die. It was no idle adventure, for scientists (biologists, geologists, physicists, and meteorologists) who accompanied the explorers were able to learn much about life and climate in the great Antarctic wastes; moreover, it was undertaken for the honour of their country.

These Englishmen died with a bold spirit. The expedition that had set out with such gallantry and hope was a month behind the Norwegian Amundsen in its final dash to the Pole. Not one of the five who formed the Polar party lived to return home. A month after they had reached the Pole, Petty Officer Edgar Evans, the strongest of the five, died partly as the result of a heavy fall that injured his brain. A month later, after incredible suffering, Captain Oates walked alone into the blizzard to give his friends a chance to live. There can be no greater adventure than this.

The story is told by Captain Scott himself. His diary was with his body when the search-party found it eight months later.

Monday, February 19, 1912. Temp. —17°.¹ We have struggled out 4·6 miles in a short day over a really terrible surface—it has been like pulling over desert

¹ That is, 49 degrees (F.) of frost.

sand, without the least glide in the world. If this goes on we shall have a bad time, but I sincerely trust it is only the result of the windless area close to the coast and that, as we are making steadily outwards, we shall shortly escape it. It is perhaps premature to be anxious about covering distance. In all other respects things are improving. We have our sleeping-bags spread on the sledge and they are drying, but, above all, we have our full measure of food again. To-night we had a sort of stew fry of pemmican¹ and horseflesh, and voted it the best hoosh² we had ever had on a sledge journey. The absence of poor Evans is a help to the commissariat, but if he had been here in a fit state we might have got along faster. I wonder what is in store for us, with some little alarm at the lateness of the season.

Friday, March 2. Lunch. Misfortunes rarely come singly. We marched to the [Middle Barrier] depôt fairly easily yesterday afternoon and since that have suffered three distinct blows which have placed us in a bad position. First we found a shortage of oil; with most rigid economy it can scarce carry us to the next depôt on this surface [71 miles away]. Second, Titus³ Oates disclosed his feet, the toes showing very bad indeed, evidently bitten by the late temperatures. The third blow came in the night, when the wind, which we had hailed with some joy, brought dark overcast weather. It fell below -40° in the night and this morning it took $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours to get our foot-gear on, but we got away before eight. We lost cairn and tracks together and made as steady as we could N. by W., but have seen nothing.

¹ Pressed meat, like corned beef.

² Thick soup.

³ This is a nickname recalling the Popish Plot in the days of Charles II.

Worse was to come—the surface is simply awful. In spite of strong wind and full sail we have done only $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles. We are in a *very* queer street, since there is no doubt we cannot do the extra marches and feel the cold horribly.

Sunday, March 4. Lunch. Things looking *very* black indeed. As usual we forgot our trouble last night, got into our bags, slept splendidly on good hoosh, woke and had another, and started marching. Sun shining brightly, tracks clear, but surface covered with sandy frost-rime. All the morning we had to pull with all our strength and in $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours we covered $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Last night it was overcast and thick, surface bad; this morning sun shining and surface as bad as ever. Under the immediate surface crystals is a hard sastrugi¹ surface, which must have been excellent for pulling a week or two ago. We are about 42 miles from the next depôt and have a week's food, but only about 3 to 4 days' fuel—we are as economical of the latter as one can possibly be and we cannot afford to save food and pull as we are pulling. We are in a very tight place indeed, but none of us are despondent *yet*, or at least we preserve every semblance of good cheer, but one's heart sinks as the sledge stops dead at some sastrugi behind which the surface sand lies thickly heaped. For the moment the temperature is in the -20° , an improvement which makes us much more comfortable, but a colder snap is bound to come again soon. I fear that Oates at least will weather such an event very poorly. Providence to our aid! We can expect little from man now except the possibility of extra food at the next depôt. It will be bad if we get there and find the same shortage of oil. Shall we get there?

¹ Frozen surface made rough by the wind.

Such a short distance it would have appeared to us on the summit! I don't know what I should do if Wilson and Bowers weren't so determinedly cheerful over things.

Monday, March 5. Lunch. Regret to say going from bad to worse. We got a slant of wind yesterday afternoon and going on 5 hours we converted our wretched morning run of $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles into something over 9. We went to bed on a cup of cocoa and pemmican solid with the chill off. (R47.)¹ The result is telling on all, but mainly on Oates, whose feet are in a wretched condition. One swelled up tremendously last night and he is very lame this morning. We started march on tea and pemmican as last night—we pretend to prefer the pemmican this way. Marched for 5 hours this morning over a slightly better surface covered with high moundy sastrugi. Sledge collapsed twice; we pulled on foot, covering about $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles. We are two pony marches and 4 miles from our depôt. Our fuel dreadfully low and the poor Soldier² nearly done. It is pathetic enough because we can do nothing for him; more hot food might do a little, but only a little. We none of us expected these terribly low temperatures, and of the rest of us Wilson is feeling them most; mainly, I fear, from his self-sacrificing devotion in doctoring Oates' feet. We cannot help each other, each has enough to do to take care of himself. We get cold on the march when the trudging is heavy and the wind pierces our worn garments. The others, all of them, are unendingly cheerful when in the tent. We mean to see the game through with a proper spirit, but it's tough work to be pulling harder than we ever

¹ This means the forty-seventh camp since leaving the Pole.

² Oates was a captain in the Inniskilling Dragoons.

pulled in our lives for long hours, and to feel that the progress is so slow. One can only say "God help us!" and hold on our weary way, cold and very miserable, though outwardly cheerful. We talk of all sorts of subjects in the tent, not much of food now, since we decided to take the risk of running a full ration. We simply couldn't go hungry at this time.

Wednesday, March 7. A little worse, I fear. One of Oates' feet *very* bad this morning; he is wonderfully brave. We still talk of what we will do together at home.

We made only $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles yesterday. This morning in $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours we did just over 4 miles. We are 16 from our depôt. If we can only find the correct proportion of food there and this surface continues, we may get to the next depôt (Mt. Hooper, 72 miles on) but not to One Ton Camp. We hope against hope that the dogs have been to Mt. Hooper; then we might pull through. If there is a shortage of oil again we can have little hope. One feels that for poor Oates the crisis is near, but none of us are improving, though we are wonderfully fit considering the really excessive work we are doing. We are only kept going by good food. No wind this morning till a chill northerly air came ahead. Sun bright and cairns showing up well. I should like to keep the track to the end.

Thursday, March 8. Lunch. Worse and worse in morning; poor Oates' left foot can never last out, and time over foot-gear something awful. Have to wait in night foot-gear for nearly an hour before I started changing and then am generally first to be ready. Wilson's feet giving trouble now. We did $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles this morning and are now $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the depôt—a ridiculously small distance to feel in difficulties, yet on

this surface we know we cannot equal half our old marches, and that for that effort we expend nearly double the energy. The great question is, What shall we find at the dépôt? If the dogs have visited it, we may get along a good distance, but if there is another short allowance of fuel,¹ God help us indeed. We are in a very bad way, I fear, in any case.

Saturday, March 10. Things are steadily downhill. Oates' foot worse. He has rare pluck and must know that he can never get through. He asked Wilson if he had a chance this morning, and of course Bill had to say he didn't know. In point of fact he has none. Apart from him, if he went under now, I doubt whether we could get through. With great care we might have a dog's chance, but no more. The weather conditions are awful, and our gear gets steadily more icy and difficult to manage. At the same time, of course, poor Titus is the greatest handicap. He keeps us waiting in the morning until we have partly lost the warming effect of our good breakfast, when the only wise policy is to be up and away at once; again at lunch. Poor chap! it is too pathetic to watch him; one cannot but try to cheer him up.

Yesterday we marched up the dépôt, Mt. Hooper. Cold comfort. Shortage on our allowance all round.

This morning it was calm when we breakfasted, but the wind came from the W.N.W. as we broke camp. It rapidly grew in strength. After travelling for half an hour I saw none of us could go on facing such conditions. We were forced to camp and are spending the rest of the day in a comfortless blizzard camp, wind quite foul.

¹ Much of the fuel had evaporated after having been deposited by parties sent ahead before the Pole was reached.

Sunday, March 11. Titus Oates is very near the end, one feels. What we or he will do, God only knows. We discussed the matter after breakfast; he is a brave fine fellow and understands the situation, but he practically asked for advice. Nothing could be said but to urge him to march as long as he could. One satisfactory result to the discussion: I practically ordered Wilson to hand over the means of ending our troubles to us, so that any one of us may know how to do so. Wilson had no choice between doing so and our ransacking the medicine case. We have 30 opium tabloids apiece and he is left with a tube of morphine. So far the tragical side of our story.

The sky was completely overcast when we started this morning. We could see nothing, lost the tracks, and doubtless have been swaying a good deal since—3·1 miles for the forenoon—terribly heavy dragging—expected it. Know that 6 miles is about the limit of our endurance now, if we get no help from wind or surfaces. We have 7 days' food and should be about 55 miles from One Ton Camp to-night, $6 \times 7 = 42$, leaving us 13 miles short of our distance, even if things get no worse. Meanwhile the season rapidly advances.

Monday, March 12. We did 6·9 miles yesterday, under our necessary average. Things are left much the same, Oates not pulling much, and now with hands as well as feet pretty well useless. We did 4 miles this morning in 4 hours 20 minutes. We may hope for 3 this afternoon, $7 \times 6 = 42$. We shall be 47 miles from the dépôt. I doubt if we can possibly do it. The surface remains awful, the cold intense, and our physical condition running down. God help us! Not a breath of favourable

wind for more than a week and apparently we are liable to head winds at any moment.

Wednesday, March 14. No doubt about the going downhill, but everything going wrong for us. Yesterday we woke to a strong northerly wind with temperature -37° . Couldn't face it, so remained in camp till 2, then did $5\frac{1}{4}$ miles. Wanted to march later, but party feeling the cold badly as the breeze (N.) never took off entirely, and as the sun sank the temperature fell. Long time getting supper in dark.

This morning started with a southerly breeze, set sail and passed another cairn at good speed; half-way, however, the wind shifted to W. by S. or W.S.W., blew through our wind clothes and into our mits. Poor Wilson horribly cold, could not get off ski for some time. Bowers and I practically made camp, and when we got into the tent at last we were all deadly cold. Then temperature at mid-day was -43° and the wind strong. We *must* go on, but now the making of every camp must be more difficult and dangerous. It must be near the end, but a pretty merciful end. Poor Oates got it again in the foot. I shudder to think what it will be like to-morrow. It is only with the greatest pains the rest of us keep off frostbites. No idea there could be temperatures like this at this time of year with such winds. Truly awful outside the tent. Must fight it out to the last biscuit, but can't reduce rations.

Friday, March 16 or Saturday 17. Lost track of dates, but think the last correct. Tragedy all along the line. At lunch, the day before yesterday, poor Titus Oates said he couldn't go on; he proposed we should leave him in his sleeping-bag. That we could not do, and we

induced him to come on, on the afternoon march. In spite of its awful nature for him he struggles on and made a few miles. At night he was worse and we knew the end had come.

Should this be found I want these facts recorded. Oates' last thoughts were of his Mother, but immediately before he took pride in thinking that his regiment would be pleased with the bold way in which he met his death. We can testify to his bravery. He has borne intense suffering for weeks without complaint, and to the very last was able and willing to discuss outside subjects. He did not—would not—give up hope till the very end. He was a brave soul. This was the end. He slept through the night before last hoping not to wake; but he woke in the morning—yesterday. It was blowing a blizzard. He said, "I am just going outside and may be some time." He went out into the blizzard and we have not seen him since.

I take this opportunity of saying that we have stuck to our sick companions to the last. In case of Edgar Evans, when absolutely out of food and he lay insensible, the safety of the remainder seemed to demand his abandonment, but Providence mercifully removed him at this critical moment. He died a natural death, and we did not leave him till two hours after his death. We knew that poor Oates was walking to his death, but though we tried to dissuade him, we knew it was the act of a brave man and an English gentleman. We all hope to meet the end with a similar spirit, and assuredly the end is not far.

From the diary of
CAPTAIN ROBERT FALCON SCOTT

THE HUMAN GUN-CARRIAGE

THE story of Gaspar Ruiz is told by General Santierra many years after the events described had taken place, and when he was only a junior officer on the staff of General Robles, one of the leaders of the South American revolt against the oppressive rule of Royalist Spain.

In the early part of the story Lieutenant Santierra had shown a kindness to Gaspar Ruiz when he as a private soldier was waiting to be shot as a deserter. This kindness was never forgotten.

By what seemed almost a miracle Gaspar Ruiz escaped death, and later, by reason of his military skill and great personal courage and strength, he actually became military commander of Southern Chile.

Unfortunately, the Civil Governor became unjustly suspicious of him and wrote to the Central Government accusing him of treachery. Gaspar Ruiz heard of this. He rode, in anger, to the Government House, seized the man, and flung him bodily down the steps into the street, where he was shot by some of Ruiz' bodyguard.

From this moment Gaspar Ruiz and his army became outlaws. General Robles led his troops against him, but always Ruiz seemed to outwit and outmanœuvre him.

“NEVERTHELESS, slowly, inch by inch as it were, our columns were closing upon Gaspar Ruiz, though he

had managed to raise all the Araucanian nation of wild Indians against us. Then a year or more later our Government became aware through its agents and spies that he had actually entered into alliance with Carreras, the so-called dictator of the so-called republic of Mendoza, on the other side of the mountains. Whether Gaspar Ruiz had a deep political intention, or whether he wished only to secure a safe retreat for his wife and child while he pursued remorselessly against us his war of surprises and massacres, I cannot tell. The alliance, however, was a fact. Defeated in his attempt to check our advance from the sea, he retreated with his usual swiftness, and preparing for another hard and hazardous tussle, began by sending his wife with the little girl across the Pequena range of mountains, on the frontier of Mendoza.

“Now Carreras, under the guise of politics and liberalism, was a scoundrel of the deepest dye, and the unhappy state of Mendoza was the prey of thieves, robbers, traitors and murderers, who formed his party. He was under a noble exterior a man without heart, pity, honour, or conscience. He aspired to nothing but tyranny, and though he would have made use of Gaspar Ruiz for his nefarious designs, yet he soon became aware that to propitiate the Chilian Government would answer his purpose better. I blush to say that he made proposals to our Government to deliver up on certain conditions the wife and child of the man who had trusted to his honour, and that this offer was accepted.

“While on her way to Mendoza over the Pequena pass she was betrayed by her escort of Carreras’ men,

and given up to the officer in command of a Chilian fort on the upland at the foot of the main Cordillera range. This atrocious transaction might have cost me dear, for as a matter of fact I was a prisoner in Gaspar Ruiz' camp when he received the news. I had been captured during a reconnaissance, my escort of a few troopers being speared by the Indians of his bodyguard. I was saved from the same fate because he recognized my features just in time. No doubt my friends thought I was dead, and I would not have given much for my life at any time. But the strong man treated me very well, because, he said, I had always believed in his innocence and had tried to serve him when he was a victim of injustice.

"‘And now,’ was his speech to me, ‘you shall see that I always speak the truth. You are safe.’

"‘I did not think I was very safe when I was called up to go to him one night. He paced up and down like a wild beast, exclaiming, ‘Betrayed! Betrayed!’

"‘He walked up to me clenching his fists. ‘I could cut your throat.’

"‘Will that give your wife back to you?’ I said as quietly as I could.

"‘And the child!’ he yelled out, as if mad. He fell into a chair and laughed in a frightful boisterous manner. ‘Oh, no, you are safe.’

"‘I assured him that his wife’s life was safe too; but I did not say what I was convinced of—that he would never see her again. He wanted war to the death, and the war could only end with his death.

"‘He gave me a strange, inexplicable look, and sat muttering blankly, ‘In their hands. In their hands.’

"I kept as still as a mouse before a cat.

"Suddenly he jumped up. 'What am I doing here?' he cried; and opening the door, he yelled out orders to saddle and mount. 'What is it?' he stammered, coming up to me. 'The Pequena fort; a fort of palisades! Nothing. I would get her back if she were hidden in the very heart of the mountain.' He amazed me by adding, with an effort: 'I carried her off in my two arms while the earth trembled. And the child at least is mine. She at least is mine!'

"Those were bizarre words; but I had no time for wonder.

"'You shall go with me,' he said violently. 'I may want to parley, and any other messenger from Ruiz, the outlaw, would have his throat cut.'

"This was true enough. Between him and the rest of incensed mankind there could be no communication, according to the customs of honourable warfare.

"In less than half an hour we were in the saddle, flying wildly through the night. He had only an escort of twenty men at his quarters, but would not wait for more. He sent, however, messengers to Penelco, the Indian chief then ranging in the foothills, directing him to bring his warriors to the uplands and meet him at the lake called the Eye of Water, near whose shores the frontier fort of Pequena was built.

"We crossed the lowlands with that untired rapidity of movement which had made Gaspar Ruiz' raids so famous. We followed the lower valleys up to their precipitous heads. The ride was not without its dangers. A cornice road on a perpendicular wall of basalt wound itself around a buttressing rock, and at last we emerged

from the gloom of a deep gorge upon the upland of Pequena.

“It was a plain of green wiry grass and thin flowering bushes; but high above our heads patches of snow hung in the folds and crevices of the great walls of rock. The little lake was as round as a staring eye. The garrison of the fort were just driving in their small herd of cattle when we appeared. Then the great wooden gates swung to, and that four-square enclosure of broad blackened stakes pointed at the top and barely hiding the grass roofs of the huts inside, seemed deserted, empty, without a single soul.

“But when summoned to surrender, by a man who at Gaspar Ruiz’ order rode fearlessly forward, those inside answered by a volley which rolled him and his horse over. I heard Ruiz by my side grind his teeth. ‘It does not matter,’ he said, ‘Now you go.’

“Torn and faded as its rags were, the vestiges of my uniform were recognized, and I was allowed to approach within speaking distance; and then I had to wait, because a voice clamouring through a loophole with joy and astonishment would not allow me to place a word. It was the voice of Major Pajol, an old friend. He, like my other comrades, had thought me killed a long time ago.

“‘Put spurs to your horse, man!’ he yelled, in the greatest excitement; ‘we will swing the gate open for you.’

“I let the reins fall out of my hand and shook my head. ‘I am on my honour,’ I cried.

“‘To him!’ he shouted, with infinite disgust.

“‘He promises you your life.’

“‘Our life is our own. And do you, Santierra, advise us to surrender to that rastrero?’¹

“‘No!’ I shouted. ‘But he wants his wife and child and he can cut you off from water.’

“‘Then she would be the first to suffer. You may tell him that. Look here—this is all nonsense: we shall dash out and capture you!’

“‘You shall not catch me alive,’ I said firmly.

“‘Imbecile!’

“‘For God’s sake,’ I continued hastily, ‘do not open the gate.’ And I pointed at the multitude of Peneleo’s Indians who covered the shores of the lake.

“I had never seen so many of these savages together. Their lances seemed as numerous as stalks of grass. Their hoarse voices made a vast, inarticulate sound like the murmur of the sea.

“My friend Pajol was swearing to himself. ‘Well then—go to the devil!’ he shouted, exasperated. But as I swung round he repented, for I heard him say hurriedly, ‘Shoot the fool’s horse before he gets away.’

“He had good marksmen. Two shots rang out, and in the very act of turning my horse staggered, fell and lay still as if struck by lightning. I had my feet out of the stirrups and rolled clear of him; but I did not attempt to rise. Neither dared they rush out to drag me in.

“The masses of Indians had begun to move upon the fort. They rode up in squadrons, trailing their long chusos;² then dismounted out of musket-shot, and, throwing off their fur mantles, advanced naked to the attack, stamping their feet and shouting in cadence.

¹ A cringing cur.

² Lances.

A sheet of flame ran three times along the face of the fort without checking their steady march. They crowded right up to the very stakes, flourishing their broad knives.

“But this palisade was not fastened together with hide lashings in the usual way, but with long iron nails, which they could not cut. Dismayed at the failure of their usual method of forcing an entrance, the heathen, who had marched so steadily against the musketry fire, broke and fled under the volleys of the besieged.

“Directly they had passed me on their advance I got up and rejoined Gaspar Ruiz on a low ridge which jutted out upon the plain. The musketry of his own men had covered the attack, but now at a sign from him a trumpet sounded the ‘Cease fire.’ Together we looked in silence at the hopeless rout of the savages.

“‘It must be a siege, then,’ he muttered. And I detected him wringing his hands stealthily.

“But what sort of a siege could it be? Without any need for me to repeat my friend Pajol’s message, he dared not cut the water off from the besieged. They had plenty of meat. And, indeed, if they had been short, he would have been too anxious to send food into the stockade had he been able. But as a matter of fact, it was we on the plain who were beginning to feel the pinch of hunger.

“Peneleo, the Indian chief, sat by our fire folded in his ample mantle of guanaco¹ skins. He was an athletic savage, with an enormous square shock head of hair resembling a straw beehive in shape and size and with grave, surly, much-lined features. In his broken

¹ The guanaco is the wild llama.

Spanish he repeated, growling like a bad-tempered wild beast, that if an opening ever so small were made in the stockade his men would march in and get the senora—not otherwise.

“Gaspar Ruiz, sitting opposite him, kept his eyes fixed on the fort night and day as it were, in awful silence and immobility. Meantime, by runners from the lowlands that arrived nearly every day, we heard of the defeat of one of his lieutenants in the Maipu valley. Scouts sent afar brought news of a column of infantry advancing through distant passes to the relief of the fort. They were slow, but we could trace their toilsome progress up the lower valleys. I wondered why Ruiz did not march to attack and destroy this threatening force, in some wild gorge fit for an ambushade, in accordance with his genius for guerilla warfare. But his genius seemed to have abandoned him to his despair.

“It was obvious to me that he could not tear himself away from the sight of the fort. I protest to you, senores, that I was moved almost to pity by the sight of the powerless strong man sitting on the ridge, indifferent to sun, to rain, to cold, to wind; with his hands clasped round his legs and his chin resting on his knees, gazing—gazing—gazing.

“And the fort he kept his eyes fastened on was as still and silent as himself. The garrison gave no sign of life. They did not even answer the desultory fire directed at the loopholes.

“One night, as I strolled past him, he, without changing his attitude, spoke to me unexpectedly. ‘I have sent for a gun,’ he said. ‘I shall have time to get

her back and retreat before your Robles manages to crawl up here.'

"He had sent for a gun to the plains.

"It was long in coming, but at last it came. It was a seven-pounder field-gun. Dismounted and lashed crosswise to two long poles, it had been carried up the narrow paths between two mules with ease. His wild cry of exultation at daybreak when he saw the gun escort emerge from the valley rings in my ears now.

"But, senores, I have no words to depict his amazement, his fury, his despair and distraction, when he heard that the animal loaded with the gun-carriage had, during the last night march, somehow or other tumbled down a precipice. He broke into menaces of death and torture against the escort. I kept out of his way all that day, lying behind some bushes, and wondering what he would do now. Retreat was left for him; but he could not retreat.

"I saw below me his artillerist, Jorge, an old Spanish soldier, building up a sort of structure with heaped-up saddles. The gun, ready-loaded, was lifted on to that, but in the act of firing the whole thing collapsed and the shot flew high above the stockade.

"Nothing more was attempted. One of the ammunition mules had been lost too, and they had no more than six shots to fire; amply enough to batter down the gate, providing the gun was well laid.¹ This was impossible without its being properly mounted. There was not time nor means to construct a carriage. Already every moment I expected to hear Robles' bugle-calls echo amongst the crags.

¹ Aimed.

"Peneleo, wandering about uneasily, draped in his skins, sat down for a moment near me growling his usual tale.

"Make an entrada—a hole. If make a hole, bueno. If not make a hole, then vamos—we must go away!"

"After sunset I observed with surprise the Indians making preparations as if for another assault. Their lines stood ranged in the shadows of the mountains. On the plain in front of the fort gate I saw a group of men swaying about in the same place.

"I walked down the ridge disregarded. The moonlight in the clear air of the uplands was as bright as day, but the intense shadows confused my sight, and I could not make out what they were doing. I heard the voice of Jorge, the artillerist,¹ say in a queer, doubtful tone, 'It is loaded, senores.'

"Then another voice in that group pronounced firmly the words 'Bring the riata² here.' It was the voice of Gaspar Ruiz.

"A silence fell, in which the popping shots of the besieged garrison rang out sharply. They too had observed the group. But the distance was too great, and in the spatter of spent musket-balls cutting up the ground, the group opened, closed, swayed, giving me a glimpse of busy stooping figures in its midst. I drew nearer, doubting whether this was a weird vision, a suggestive and insensate dream.

"A strangely stifled voice commanded, 'Haul the hitches tighter.'

"Si, senor,' several other voices answered in tones of awed alacrity.

¹ *Gunlayer* is the more usual word.

² A length of rope.

"Then the stifled voice said: 'Like this. I must be free to breathe.'

"Then there was a concerned noise of many men together. 'Help him up, hombres. Steady! Under the other arm.'

"That deadened voice ordered: 'Bueno! Stand away from me, men.'

"I pushed my way through the recoiling circle, and heard once more that same oppressed voice saying earnestly: 'Forget that I am a living man, Jorge. Forget me altogether, and think of what you have to do.'

"'Be without fear, senor. You are nothing to me but a gun-carriage, and I shall not waste a shot.'

"I heard the spluttering of a port-fire, and smelt the saltpetre of the match. I saw suddenly before me a nondescript shape on all fours like a beast, but with a man's head drooping below a tubular projection over the nape of the neck, and the gleam of a rounded mass of bronze on its back.

"In front of a silent semicircle of men it squatted alone with Jorge behind it and a trumpeter motionless, his trumpet in his hand, by its side.

"Jorge, bent double, muttered, port-fire in hand: 'An inch to the left, senor. Too much. So. Now, if you let yourself down a little by letting your elbows bend, I will . . .'

"He leaped aside, lowering his port-fire, and a burst of flame darted out of the muzzle of the gun lashed on the man's back.

"Then Gaspar Ruiz lowered himself slowly. 'Good shot?' he asked.

"'Full on, senor.'

“‘Then load again.’

“He lay there before me on his breast under the darkly glittering bronze of his monstrous burden, such as no love or strength of man had ever had to bear in the lamentable history of the world. His arms were spread out, and he resembled a prostrate penitent on the moonlit ground.

“Again I saw him raised to his hands and knees, and the men stand away from him, and old Jorge stoop, glancing along the gun.

“‘Left a little. Right an inch. Por Dios, senor, stop this trembling. Where is your strength?’

“The old gunner’s voice was cracked with emotion. He stepped aside, and quick as lightning brought the spark to the touch-hole.

“‘Excellent!’ he cried tearfully; but Gaspar Ruiz lay for a long time silent, flattened on the ground.

“‘I am tired,’ he murmured at last. ‘Will another shot do it?’

“‘Without doubt,’ said Jorge, bending down to his ear.

“‘Then—load,’ I heard him utter distinctly. ‘Trumpeter!’

“‘I am here, senor, ready for your word.’

“‘Blow a blast at this word that shall be heard from one end of Chile to the other,’ he said, in an extraordinarily strong voice. ‘And you others stand ready to cut this accursed riata, for then will be the time for me to lead you in your rush. Now raise me up, and you, Jorge—be quick with your aim!’

“The rattle of musketry from the fort nearly drowned his voice. The palisade was wreathed in smoke and flame,

“‘Exert your force forward against the recoil, *mi amo*,’ said the old gunner shakily. ‘Dig your fingers into the ground. So. Now!’

“A cry of exultation escaped him after the shot. The trumpeter raised his trumpet nearly to his lips, and waited. But no word came from the prostrate man. I fell on one knee, and heard all he had to say then.

“‘Something broken,’ he whispered, lifting his head a little, and turning his eyes towards me in his hopelessly crushed attitude.

“‘The gate hangs only by the splinters,’ yelled Jorge.

“Gaspar Ruiz tried to speak, but his voice died out in his throat, and I helped to roll the gun off his broken back. He was insensible.”

JOSEPH CONRAD,
Gaspar Ruiz

GREEN HELL

It is indeed a far cry to the tropical grasslands of South America. You will find this novel kind of tug-of-war grotesque, though humorous and exciting; after reading about it you will certainly want to get the book.

At eleven o'clock next morning Bee-Mason lay sprawled beneath a tree. His bony legs, which were sharply visible through his riding breeches, rose like a gigantic peak out of the plain of his body. His mouth hung open, his hat reposed saucily against one ear, and an outrageous spotted handkerchief concealed all but the tip of a raw and peeling nose; while the heavy silence of Green Hell was desecrated by a slow musketry of snores.

Overhead a bright, persistent sun was engaged in soaking up the moisture from the marshes, so that a veil of heat mist danced over the land. Plovers swooped lazily in the shimmering atmosphere, and uttered their rasping screams in a manner which suggested that the lethargy of the tropics had taken possession of their spurred wings. From the far distance came the dim pop-pop of Urrio's shot-gun, for it had been arranged that he should presently drive the monstrous company of duck over the cinema. Meanwhile, the insects droned through the silence, the swamp gave forth its

pungent odours, the world and Bee-Mason slept, but Urrio seemed to be in no hurry.

By and by, oppressed by the heat, I sought about for some shade. I wandered carelessly through the trees, trying this place and that, until gradually it dawned on me that there was no such thing. At first I thought that my senses were cheating me. I had never met a wood so destitute of shade, and indeed, the only creatures which I knew to consume their own image were ghosts. Rather stupidly, for the glare had dulled my brain, I looked up into the branches. Nothing stirred. Each trunk stood rigidly by itself, contributing nothing but its stature to the scenery. Then it was that I realized that, the sun being directly overhead, the shadow was slithering down the stems, after the fashion of lightning.

My first thought was for Bee-Mason, and I ran back to where he lay noisily in the sunlight. I knew of the terrible power of the African sun, and concluded that the South American would have a like effect. In this I was wrong, for the New World is in all things a law unto herself, and Green Hell has decreed that sunstroke shall not disgrace her boundaries. In point of fact it is unknown. Still, I roused Bee-Mason with my boot, mentioned the headache that would be his lot if he lay there much longer, and brought him to his feet. Together we sauntered off into the marshes, partly out of idleness, partly because there was nothing else to do. So we picked our way gingerly through the water and came upon a stretch of land that ran away to the river. Small deep pools studded the surface and gleamed like crystals on a background of green lacquer. A few wild

duck flapped up at our approach. Suddenly, Bee-Mason touched my arm and pointed across the sedge.

"There's something moving near that pool," he said in a strange voice.

I followed his fingers, and saw a queer movement in the grass. It was peculiar in that it seemed to be happening over a large number of feet at the same moment. Slow, unhurriedly regular, it swayed the green stems with a gliding, undulatory movement, and approached us steadily.

"I believe it is a water-snake," I said.

Instantly Bee-Mason became alive. His eyes shone with the glory of a fanatic, his face twitched, and a man who lived for his art stood transfigured before me.

"My camera!" he said. "Keep the brute in play until I return," and he was gone, splashing like a deer through the marshland.

I was now left with a probably hostile water-snake, and a few dim memories of books of travel. I had heard that a constrictor needs an anchor for its tail before it can contort its huge muscles round the body of its victim. I also knew that the prick of a knife has been known to work marvels when applied with science and agility; and that if one stands with arms akimbo while the reptile is crawling to its grip, a sudden drop of the arms and a quick jump back will disengage the coils. At the same time I was not eager.

It was pure fear that kept me in that swamp. Bee-Mason is a roaring monomaniac on the question of his camera, and will go to inhuman lengths to get just that look of agony which appeals so greatly to audiences. I knew that he would rescue me if I were in real danger,

but I was also certain that he would leave it to the last possible moment, probably until I was half-way down the throat. Still, I was considerably more afraid of the biting contempt that would transfigure his priest-like features in the event of my failure than I was of any water-snake, so I cleared myself for action by loosening my hunting-knife in its sheath.

Meanwhile, the anaconda had advanced to within twenty yards of me, and was paying no attention. Keeping its spade-shaped head an inch or so above the ground, it shuffled its curves through the grass in a bored and supercilious manner. From the extreme grace and lack of self-consciousness with which it drew its fifteen feet of spotted, brownish-green elegance towards me, I should think it had never seen a human. Certainly it had never been frightened. In every way the meeting was a courteous one, and had it not been necessary to secure a picture of the creature I should have admired its beauty from afar. As it was it would have been lost in the bushes long before Bee-Mason could return. And in case anyone should imagine that I was in danger of death at any minute during our encounter, let me hasten to deny the fact. Nevertheless, I was a tenderfoot, it was my first large snake, and I was suitably nervous.

With a last jerk of my belt I looked back to see how Bee-Mason was faring and spied him about half a mile away. He was behaving like a gallant old Conquistador under the heat of that implacable sun, for he staggered and stumbled and tripped as he ran with the camera and tripod over his shoulder. On a track in a cold country the record for the half mile is something inside

two minutes; what it is in riding breeches through marsh under a heavy load I do not know. It seemed like twenty, for with a last pathetic glance at my companion I stepped up to the snake and caught it by the back of the neck.

In the wink of an eye its air of boredom vanished, its jaws snapped open and I had a quick glimpse of white teeth. The small, dark eyes went black with fear and fury, and it lashed like a whip with its tail. So must the first slave have looked when unsuspecting, he ventured too near to Sir John Hawkins. Even at the time I was quite convinced that the creature meant no harm. It was in no need of a meal, and would have been perfectly content to pass me by, but for all that it had no intention of submitting to treatment of this ungracious kind. Stubbornly it fought for its liberty.

It is a curious sensation, slimy, and beyond doubt unpleasant, to feel a constrictor wrestling for freedom in one's arms. Muscles appear from nowhere and play beneath the skin, rising into knots and dissolving into jelly at the command of the small brain within the spade-shaped head. Moreover, these muscles appear to be entirely divorced from every other portion of the body. My feet were planted wide apart, and my hands were grasping the anaconda with what in any other animal would have been a half-nelson. My left hand held the neck, and my right, after passing under the throat, attached itself to the left wrist. In this way I was able to regulate the passage of air. Unfortunately, a constrictor, usually a sluggish creature, is at its most active when short of wind. It strained and leaped beneath the pressure, and I could feel, rather than see,

the blind frenzy of the tail, which was searching for a tree-trunk behind me. On that score, however, I was safe, for I had taken peculiar pains that the affair should take place in the open.

After a period of silent struggle I heard a noise of panting and looked up. Bee-Mason, crimson with exercise, was straddling the camera over a small spit of dry ground. His hat was tilted over his neck, his peeling nose added a touch of the grotesque which the spotted neckerchief did little to dispel. He was blowing so hard that the professional part of the business was shaky beyond belief. He peered at his lens, wiped it with a rag, produced a tape measure and strode over to me. "Eight feet," he gasped, "must get it exact."

"You won't get anything," I retorted, "unless you hurry. I can give you just two minutes before my arms crack."

That moved him. He dropped the tape into a puddle and flew to the handle. To the whirr of the machine, he added a variety of instruction.

"Don't look at the camera," he urged. "You've got to seem natural. Loosen your grip, or you'll strangle it. Now, more movement. That's good! Hold it!"

"I am," I said stiffly. "By the neck. I thought perhaps you'd noticed."

"The pose, you fool. Shift your head so that you stare into the lens without seeming to know it's there. Can you force its jaws open? Splendid!"

Those two minutes were the most strenuous I ever spent. Not only did I have to act myself, but I had to coach a bitterly hostile anaconda in its lines. Gradually the fingers of my left hand grew numb, and my pupil,

sensing my approaching weakness, doubled its activities. At last I could stand no more. I dropped it and jumped back. Once free, the unwilling actor seemed to bear no malice. With a shake of its head it made straight for the deepest part of the swamp, and we cheered it on its way with a loud hallo. From first to last there had been no bad blood.

“H’m,” said Bee-Mason, mopping himself and at the same time deflating any pride I may have felt, “it must have been distended and sleepy. You could never have held it, not fifteen feet, if it had been all there.”

JULIAN DUGUID,
Green Hell

A DESPERATE RACE

You will find this adventure most exciting, not merely in itself, but in the way it is told. The writer skilfully uses dialogue and frequent interruptions to intensify the excitement as the tale grows to its climax, though perhaps when you get to the end you may feel that there is no climax.

Like all good story-tellers, the narrator of this tale of a desperate race with its alarming crises is careful to give details, sometimes the most minute particulars, so that you may be led to believe every word.

SOME years ago, I was one of a convivial party that met in the principal hotel in the town of Columbus, Ohio, the seat of government of the Buckeye State.

It was a winter's evening, when all without was bleak and stormy and all within were blithe and gay—when song and story made the circuit of the festive board, filling up the chasms of life with mirth and laughter.

We had met for the express purpose of making a night of it, and the pious intention was duly and most religiously carried out. The Legislature was in session in that town, and not a few of the worthy legislators were present upon this occasion.

One of these worthies I will name, as he not only

took a big swath in the evening's entertainment, but he was a man more generally known than our worthy President, James K. Polk. That man was the famous Captain Riley, whose 'Narrative' of suffering and adventures is pretty generally known all over the civilized world. Captain Riley was a fine, fat, good-humoured joker, who at the period of my story was the representative of the Dayton district, and lived near that little city when at home. Well, Captain Riley had amused the company with many of his far-famed and singular adventures, which, being mostly told before and read by millions of people that have seen his book, I will not attempt to repeat.

Many were the stories and adventures told by the company, when it came to the turn of a well-known gentleman who represented the Cincinnati district. As Mr —— is yet among the living, and perhaps not disposed to be the subject of joke or story, I do not feel at liberty to give his name. Mr —— was a slow believer of other men's adventures, and, at the same time, much disposed to magnify himself into a marvellous hero whenever the opportunity offered. As Captain Riley wound up one of his truthful though really marvellous adventures, Mr —— coolly remarked that the captain's story was all very well, but it did not begin to compare with an adventure that he had, "once upon a time," on the Ohio, below the present city of Cincinnati.

"Let's have it!—Let's have it!" resounded from all hands.

"Well, gentlemen," said the Senator, clearing his voice for action and knocking the ashes from his cigar

against the arm of his chair, "gentlemen, I am not in the habit of spinning yarns of marvellous or fictitious matters; and therefore it is scarcely necessary to affirm upon the responsibility of my reputation, gentlemen, that what I am about to tell you I most solemnly proclaim to be truth, and . . ."

"Oh, never mind that: go on, Mr ——," chimed the party.

"Well, gentlemen, in 18— I came down the Ohio River and settled at Losanti, now called Cincinnati. It was at that time but a little settlement of some twenty or thirty log and frame cabins, and where now stand the Broadway Hotel and blocks of stones and dwelling-houses, was the cottage and corn-patch of old Mr ——, the tailor, who, by the by, bought that land for the making of a coat for one of the settlers. Well, I put up my cabin, with the aid of my neighbours, and put in a patch of corn and potatoes, about where the Fly Market now stands, and set about improving my lot, house, etc.

"Occasionally I took up my rifle and started off with my dog down the river, to look up a little deer, or *bar*¹ meat, then very plenty along the river. The red-skins were lurking about and hovering around the settlement, and every once in a while picked off some of our neighbours or stole our cattle or horses. I hated the red demons, and made no bones of peppering the serpents whenever I got a sight at them. In fact, the red rascals had a dread of me, and had laid a good many traps to get my scalp, but I wasn't to be caught napping. No, no, gentlemen, I was too well up to 'em for that.

¹ Bear.

"Well, I started off one morning, pretty early, to take a hunt, and travelled a long way down the river, over the bottoms and hills, but couldn't find no *bar* nor deer. About four o'clock in the afternoon I made tracks for the settlement again. By and by I sees a buck just ahead of me, walking leisurely down the river. I slipped up, with my faithful old dog close in my rear, to within clever shooting-distance, and just as the buck stuck his nose in the drink I drew a bead upon his top-knot, and over he tumbled, and splurged and bounded awhile, when I came up and relieved him by cutting his wizen . . ."

"Well, but what has that to do with an *adventure*?" said Riley.

"Hold on a bit, if you please, gentlemen; by Jove, it had a great deal to do with it. For while I was busy skinning the hind-quarters of the buck, and stowing away the kidney-fat in my hunting-shirt, I heard a noise like the breaking of brush under a moccasin up 'the bottom.' My dog heard it and started up to reconnoitre, and I lost no time in reloading my rifle. I had hardly got my priming out before my dog raised a howl and broke through the brush towards me with his tail down, as he was not used to doing unless there were wolves, painters (panthers), or Injins about.

"I picked up my knife, and took up my line of march in a skulking trot up the river. The frequent gullies on the lower bank made it tedious travelling there, so I scrabbled up to the upper bank, which was pretty well covered with buckeye and sycamore, and very little underbrush. One peep below discovered to me three as big and strapping red rascals, gentlemen, as you

ever clapped your eyes on! Yes, there they came, not above six hundred yards in my rear, shouting and yelling like hounds, and coming after me like all possessed."

"Well," said an old woodsman, sitting at the table, "you took a tree, of course."

"Did I? No, gentlemen, I took no tree just then, but I took to my heels like sixty, and it was just as much as my old dog could do to keep up with me. I ran until the whoops of my red-skins grew fainter and fainter behind me, and, clean out of wind, I ventured to look behind me, and there came one single red whelp, puffing and blowing, not three hundred yards in my rear. He had got on to a piece of bottom where the trees were small and scarce. 'Now,' thinks I, 'old fellow, I'll have you.' So I trotted off at a pace sufficient to let my follower gain on me, and when he had got just about near enough I wheeled and fired, and down I brought him, dead as a door-nail, at a hundred and twenty yards!"

"Then you skelp'd [scalped] him immediately?" said the backwoodsman.

"Very clear of it, gentlemen; for by the time I got my rifle loaded, here came the other two red-skins, shouting and whooping close on me, and away I broke again like a quarter-horse. I was now about five miles from the settlement, and it was getting towards sunset. I ran till my wind began to be pretty short, when I took a look back, and there they came, snorting like mad buffaloes, one about two or three hundred yards ahead of the other: so I acted possum¹ again until the foremost Injin

¹ Pretended to be dead.

got pretty well up, and I wheeled and fired at the very moment he was 'drawing a bead' on me: he fell head over stomach into the dirt, and up came the last one!"

"So you laid for him, and . . ." gasped several.

"No," continued the 'member,' "I didn't lay for him, I hadn't time to load, so I laid my *legs* to ground and started again. I heard every bound he made after me. I ran and ran until the fire flew out of my eyes, and the old dog's tongue hung out of his mouth a quarter of a yard long!"

"*Phe-e-e-w!*" whistled somebody.

"Fact, gentlemen. Well, what I was to do I didn't know: rifle empty, no big trees about, and a murdering Red Indian not three hundred yards in my rear; and what was worse, just then it occurred to me that I was not a great ways from a big creek (now called Mill Creek), and there I should be pinned at last.

"Just at this juncture, I struck my toe against a root, and down I tumbled, and my old dog over me. Before I could scramble up . . ."

"The Indian fired!" gasped the old woodsman.

"He did, gentlemen, and I felt the ball strike me under the shoulder; but that didn't seem to put any embargo upon my locomotion, for as soon as I got up I took off again, quite freshened by my fall! I heard the red-skin close behind me coming booming on, and every minute I expected to have his tomahawk dashed into my head or shoulders!

"Something kind of cool begun to trickle down my legs into my boots——"

"Blood, eh? for the shot the varmint gin¹ you," said the old woodsman, in a great state of excitement.

"I thought so," said the Senator; "but what do you think it was?"

Not being blood, we were all puzzled to know what the blazes it could be; when Riley observed:

"I suppose you had . . ."

"Melted the deer-fat which I had stuck in the breast of my hunting-shirt, and the grease was running down my legs until my feet got so greasy that my heavy boots flew off, and one, hitting the dog, nearly knocked his brains out."

We all grinned, but the 'member' observed:

"I hope, gentlemen, no man here will presume to think I'm exaggerating?"

"Oh, certainly not! Go on, Mr——," we all chimed in.

"Well, the ground under my feet was soft, and, being relieved of my heavy boots, I put off with double-quick time, and, seeing the creek about half a mile off, I ventured to look over my shoulder to see what kind of chance there was to hold up and load. The red-skin was coming jogging along, pretty well blowed out, about five hundred yards in the rear. Thinks I, 'Here goes to load, anyhow.' So at it I went: in went the powder, and, putting on my patch, down went the ball about half-way, and off snapped my ramrod!"

"Thunder and lightning!" shouted the old woodsman, who was worked up to the top-notch in the 'member's' story.

¹ "Because of the shot that the vermin had given you." The term *vermin* is strictly applied to rats and mice. Here it is used in contempt of a supposedly inferior race.

"Good gracious! wasn't I in a pickle! There was the red whelp within two hundred yards of me, pacing along and *loading up his rifle as he came!* I jerked out the broken ramrod, dashed it away, and started on, priming up as I cantered off, determined to turn and give the red-skin a blast, anyhow, as soon as I reached the creek.

"I was now within a hundred yards of the creek, could see the smoke from the settlement chimneys. A few more jumps, and I was by the creek. The Indian was close upon me: he gave a whoop, and I raised my rifle: on he came, knowing that I had broken my ramrod and load shot down: another whoop! whoop! and he was within fifty yards of me. I pulled trigger, and . . ."

"And killed *him?*" chuckled Riley.

"No, *sir!* I missed fire!"

"And the red-skin . . ." shouted the old woodsman, in a frenzy of excitement.

"*Fired and killed me!*"

The screams and shouts that followed this finale brought landlord Noble, servants, and hostlers running upstairs to see if the house was on fire!

JONATHAN F. KELLY,
A Desperate Race

SHOOTING THE RAPIDS

Agatha's Fortune, by Harold Bindloss, is a story of how a father had discovered a lode of silver in the Hudson Bay region, but had died before giving full particulars of what he had found.

Driscoll had learnt of the discovery and was hoping to claim the silver himself. Thirlwell and Scott, on the other hand, were working to ensure that Agatha would come into her rightful inheritance.

In the course of reading this book you will be entranced by the wild beauty of the Canadian scene.

BRIGHT moonlight touched the river, streaking the angry water with a silver track, when Scott and Thirlwell poled against the stream in the gloom of the wooded bank. The Shadow, swollen by melted snow, rolled by in flood, swirling along the stony beach in lines of foam and tossing about battered trunks brought down by winter storms. Farther down stream a shimmering haze of spray indicated the Grand Rapid, and Thirlwell meant to stem the current until they were far enough from the foaming turmoil to paddle across. The grey trout were shy that evening and they had let the canoe drift farther than they thought. Presently somebody hailed them from the bank, and as they let the canoe swing round in an eddy a dark figure moved out from the gloom of the pines.

"Driscoll's voice, I think," said Scott. "Head her inshore; we'll see what he wants."

Driscoll wanted them to take him across. He had left his small canoe some distance down stream, because he thought he might be drawn into the rapid before he could reach the other bank. Scott's canoe was larger, and with three men on board they could easily make head against the current.

"I guess we've got to take him," Scott remarked. "Give her a push and run her in behind the rock."

When the canoe grounded Driscoll got on board and picked up a pole. As there was not another, Thirlwell paddled in the stern while they pushed the craft through the slack. It was hard work and he noted how slowly the pines rolled past. By and by they reached an angry-white rush of current between an island and the bank, and as they could scarcely make progress Scott suggested putting down the poles and paddling across. Driscoll, however, grumbled that they were not far enough up stream, and getting out when they ran the canoe close to the driftwood that washed about the shingle, tracked her for some distance through the shallow water. While the fellow stumbled among the dead branches, Scott gave Thirlwell a meaning look that the latter thought he understood.

It was obvious that Driscoll was anxious to avoid being swept into the rapid, and Thirlwell admitted the prudence of this but did not think the danger great enough to account for his rather excessive caution. The Indians generally shot the rapid when the water was low, and although the river was now rolling down in flood it was not impossible for men with steady nerves

to take the canoe safely through to the tail-pool. He wondered whether Black Steve had been drinking, but on the whole did not think he had, and admitting that the fellow knew the streams and eddies best, let him have his way. At length, however, Scott threw down his pole.

"We're far enough and I want my supper," he said. "Get hold of the paddles and let her shoot across."

Driscoll grumbled half aloud, but made no determined protest, and paddling hard they headed obliquely for the opposite bank. As they forged through the glittering water the current swept them down, and Thirlwell noted that it was running faster than he had thought. The river was wide, and the ragged pines got indistinct as they rolled back up stream. It looked as if the canoe were standing still and the banks moving on, only that the gleaming spray-cloud got rapidly nearer. It stretched across from bank to bank, and a dull roar that rose and fell came out of the wavering mist. For the most part the current was smooth, but here and there broken lines of foam streaked its surface, and sometimes the canoe swung round in revolving eddies.

Still the dark rocks ahead got nearer and at length Driscoll made a sign that they could stop paddling. He occupied the stern, where he could steer the craft. Thirlwell, feeling breathless after his efforts, was glad to stop, and looked about as he knelt in the middle. He had often thought it was from the river one best marked the savage austerity of the wilderness. In the bush, one's view was broken by rocks and trunks, but from the wide expanse of water one could look across the belt of forest that ran back, desolate, and silent, to Hudson's Bay. Here and there the hazy outline of

a rocky height caught the eye, but, for the most part, the landscape had no charm of varied beauty. It was monotonous, sombre, and forbidding.

The canoe was now thirty or forty yards from the rough bank, and drifting fast. Driscoll obviously meant to land on a patch of shingle lower down, which was the only safe spot for some distance. At low-water one could run a canoe aground among the ledges that bordered the slack inner edge of the rapid, but when the Shadow rose in flood the current broke and boiled furiously among the rocks. One faces forward when paddling, and while Thirlwell watched the dark gaps in the pines open up and close he heard Driscoll shout. Next moment Scott leaned over the bow and plunged his arm into the water. It looked as if he had dropped his paddle and Thirlwell backed his in order to stop the craft.

The paddle floated past, too far off for Driscoll to reach, and signing to Thirlwell, he swung the canoe round, but the water was getting broken and they missed the paddle by a yard. Then they drove her ahead in a semicircle, and a minute or two had gone when Scott, leaning over cautiously, seized the paddle-haft. In the meantime, they had drifted fast, and Thirlwell saw that that patch of shingle was now up stream.

"That's awkward," Scott remarked, and the canoe rocked as Driscoll dipped his paddle.

"Drive her! You have got to make the beach," he shouted in a hoarse voice.

There was something contagious in the man's alarm, and knowing his physical courage, Thirlwell made his best effort. The sweat ran down his face, he felt his muscles strain and his sinews crack, and the canoe's

bow lifted as the paddle-blades beat the water. Driscoll leaned far forward to get a longer stroke and urged the others with breathless shouts, but the shingle they were heading for slowly slipped away.

"Try along the bank," Driscoll ordered, and Thirlwell, turning to pick up a pole, saw his face in the moonlight. It was strangely set, and he was not looking at the bank, but at the rapid. His gaze was fixed and horrified.

For some minutes they scarcely held the craft against the stream. Indeed, Thirlwell afterwards wondered why they kept it up, since it was obvious that they could not reach the landing, but imagined that Driscoll urged them. The fellow seemed resolved not to be drawn into the rapid.

"We can't make it; I've got to let up," Scott gasped at length, and Thirlwell, breathing hard, wiped his wet face as the canoe drove away.

It was galling to be beaten, and there was some danger unless the craft was handled well. Steadiness and skill were needed, but after all the risk was not greater than he had often run in the mine and on the frozen trail. The daunting thing was that Driscoll, whom they had expected to steer the canoe, looked afraid. He crouched astern, paddling in a slack, nerveless manner. There was no chance of landing now; they must run through the mad turmoil into the eddies of the tail-pool.

The roar of the flood rolled in confused echoes along the wall of pines. Angry waves broke upon the reefs near the bank, and a cloud of spray wavered and glittered above a tossing line of foam. They were drifting towards the line extraordinarily fast, and

Thirlwell felt his nerves tingle as he tried to brace himself. There was ground for being daunted, but he thought he would not have felt much disturbed had Driscoll not looked afraid.

Then Scott, kneeling in the bow, turned, and after a quick glance at Driscoll said, "Keep as cool as you can, partner. Steve's badly rattled and can't be trusted."

A minute or two afterwards, they plunged over the edge of the rapid. The air got cold and the light got dim, for a wind blew against the rush of water and the spray hid the moon. Still, they could see for a distance, and Thirlwell frankly shrank as he glanced ahead. The river was broken by ridges of leaping foam that ran one behind the other with narrow gaps between. White-ringed eddies span along the bank and the tops of dark rocks rose out of the turmoil. Moreover, there were rocks in the channels, and one must strain one's eyes for the upheavals that marked sunken shoals. Driscoll knew the reefs and eddies, and while they plunged down like a toboggan Thirlwell risked a glance astern. The man's eyes were fixed on the river, but his pose was slack. It was plain that he had not recovered, and they could expect no help from him. Thirlwell drew a deep breath and gripped his paddle hard.

He could never remember much about the next few minutes. Sometimes he shouted to Scott, and thought Scott called to him as a wedge of stone suddenly split the rushing foam and sometimes when the current boiled in fierce rebound from a hidden obstacle. The canoe plunged until the water stood up above her bows, and now and then leaped out half her length. When they durst they checked her with a back-stroke

as some danger loomed ahead, but oftener drove her faster than the current to steer her round a reef or dark, revolving pool. Yet, for the most part, she must be kept straight down stream, for if she swerved across a breaking wave its crest would curl on board and bear her down.

Thirlwell was vaguely conscious that his hand had galled and bled, but this did not matter. The trouble was that the sweat ran into his eyes and he could not see distinctly. He felt his heart thump and his breath come hard, but braced himself against the lurching and tried not to miss a stroke. If he did so, Scott, paddling in the bow, would swing her round and next moment they would be in the water.

In the meantime he was conscious of a curious fierce excitement, but had braved danger too often to indulge the feeling. It led to hot rashness, and judgment and quick but calm decision were needed now. He must concentrate all the power of his mind as well as the strength of his body on taking the canoe down to the tail-pool.

She shipped some water on the way and they could not bale. It washed about their knees as the frail craft plunged, and Thirlwell wondered anxiously how much she would carry without capsizing. The rocks and pines ashore now streamed past, blurred and indistinct, but he had seldom an opportunity for glancing at the bank. He must look ahead, and every now and then his view was shortened by a ridge of tumbling foam.

Somehow she came through, half-swamped, and swung down the savage fan-shaped rush that spread in white turmoil across the tail-pool. Paddling hard, they drove her out of the eddies that circled along the bank, and finding a slack, ran her on to a shingle beach. Then

they sat down, wet and exhausted, to recover breath. Driscoll helped to pull the canoe up, but when Thirlwell presently looked about he could not see him.

"He's gone," Scott remarked dryly. "Lit out while you were taking off your boots."

Thirlwell imagined that the roar of the river had drowned the fellow's steps, but he did not want to talk about Driscoll yet, and when he put on his boots, which had been full of water, they started for the shack. After they had changed their clothes Scott sat down and lighted his pipe.

"What do you think was the matter with Black Steve?" he asked.

"It looked as if he'd taken some liquor, but I don't know," Thirlwell answered. "He was obviously scared."

"Sure," said Scott. "But he wasn't scared of getting drowned. Steve's a better canoe hand than either of us and has physical pluck."

"Then why was he afraid?"

Scott looked thoughtful. "I imagine he was afraid of the rapid and the dark. When he hailed us to take him over, I thought it an excuse; he could have got across in his own canoe if he had braced up. My notion is he didn't want to make the trip by himself." He paused and gave Thirlwell a keen glance. "Curious, isn't it?"

"He's a curious man," said Thirlwell, who had dark suspicions that he did not want to talk about.

HAROLD BINDLOSS,
Agatha's Fortune

THE GRIM, GALLANT STORY OF COMOCK THE ESKIMO

IN simple narrative and without complaint Comock tells of a cruel climate. Like his mode of speech, his home is simple—mere blocks of ice, cut and rounded into an igloo. Travel is slow over treacherous surfaces, and frequent storms beset the traveller. One's heart aches for these people as they experience swift transitions from triumph to tragedy.

I WAS in a little Hudson Bay post at Cape Welstenholme, the north-east extreme of the bay. One morning the factor of the post said, "How about some hunting? We'll take the sloop and sail around the nose of the cape. We might see a walrus or possibly a bear among the cliffs."

We started. We came to a ledge jutting off from the cliff face. Upon it we landed and, climbing up some fifty feet, sat down. I was looking through my glass at thousands of sea pigeons flying among the rocks of a nearby island. Suddenly I saw a small boat rowing toward us. It sprawled clumsily over the lumpy sea.

An Eskimo was steering, two others were at the oars. The boat was not more than fifteen feet long, but in it we counted thirteen people, grown-ups and children, huddled together, and two dogs. A woman held a stick to hit the children and the dogs if they, by moving

suddenly in their excitement, threatened the balance of the cockleshell. Why the amazing craft did not capsize we could not understand until I saw its water-line. A series of inflated seal bladders were tied around it. These alone kept the craft afloat. The Eskimos looked like something half-bird and half-man, for their costumes were not the usual animal skin but the skins of the eider duck, feathers and all, sewn together.

As they came to land, the mother's baby that she carried naked in the hood of her *kooletah* suddenly crawled halfway out along her bare shoulder, looked up at me with big brown eyes, then stuck out its tiny arm and smiled. That broke the ice. I took its hand. The mother smiled, the children smiled, and then the father, one of the finest-looking Eskimos I've ever seen. He had a long, finely chiselled nose, a chin as solid as a rock, and penetrating, long-sighted eyes. His hair hung to his shoulders.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"My name is Comock," he answered, smiling expectantly.

"Where in the world have you come from?"

"From far away," said he, "from big island, from far over there." He pointed out to the west. "You see our *umiak* is not very good," and he laughed, and his family laughed with him.

We took them all aboard and, with this incredible contraption in tow, sailed back to the post. He told me this story. . . .

For ten winters and ten summers we have been living on an island far out on the sea, said Comock. See, my wife

has kept count. She has written it here on the handle of my harpoon, notching it with one notch for each moon.

The land where we used to live was poor; no walrus, few seals, no deer. I had two wives and many children. I did not know any more how to keep them alive, but I had an idea. Far out at sea from my land there was an island which none of my people had ever seen. I heard about it from the white chief of a whaler. He told me there were days when the sky over it was almost black with birds, the big birds that 'honk,' and there were many lakes and around them the big birds brought up their young. There were many foxes, there were many deer, and there were many bear and schools of walrus; and seals—many, many seals.

I could not keep from thinking of that land; I talked about it over and over with my wives. There was only one way to go, we all agreed: by sledge over the ice fields in winter in the moon of the most cold, when there is the least chance of the ice field parting and drifting off.

"Two days' sledging," I told my family. "Two long days it will take us if our dogs are strong and we are strong, and there is not too much rough ice."

Winter came on; we had little food, less than most winters.

"We will go," said my wife.

"Yes, we will go," said my sons.

And there was another: Annunglung, who hunted with me. He was not a good hunter, but he was not afraid. "Yes," he said. "I will go, too," and so said his wife.

The sun got lower every day. Every day we watched the ice from the high cliffs that lean out over the sea. The ice grew fast, for it was cold, until at last nowhere

was there water and the big smokes of the freezing were gone.

"Now is the time, now we will go. *Twavee*¹—quick," I said.

"*Twavee!*" said every one.

We had three sledges, twelve dogs to each sledge. They were good dogs.

In the beginning we travelled fast on smooth ice, for the wind had packed the snow hard and the dogs' feet moved so fast my eyes would swim to look at them. We never had so little use for the long whip—their tails never fell, their traces never touched the snow. We rested only twice to clear the ice from between the dogs' toes.

The long shadows in the snow grew blue like the sky. The shining left the edges of the ice. There was not much light from the stars and we stumbled. There were wails from the dogs and that was because they and we were truly tired, and it took much shaking to keep our children awake.

"*Tiamak*,"² I said. "We will stop."

"*Ae*," every one agreed.

The dogs sank into the snow, too tired to fight. While our women sat in the shelter of our sledges and nursed the small children, Annunglung and I went off with our snow knives and by good luck we found a deep drift of snow. It was good snow; the edges cut sharp and did not crumble. We cut block after block and built our igloo.³

¹ Hurry up!

² Halt!

³ The round house of an Eskimo, made from snow pressed until it is a hollowed-out mass of ice.

Our wives crept inside and they were all smiling for they were away from the burn of the cold, and they lit our seal lamps and put our willow mats and deerskins down while the children chewed their pieces of raw seal. Our wives cut seal meat and filled our mouths and we said the night was full of good signs. There were loud growls now and then running though the ice, but I said, "Never mind, there is always growling from the sea," although I feared that the ice might crack. So we fell asleep though our igloo was cold, as a new igloo always is.

We awoke early. There was still fire in the stars. It was so cold that our spit froze before it struck the ground. We were out on the ice so far now that I could not see land. And now there was rough ice—much rough ice. We moved very slowly, up and down, up and down over the jagged piles of ice—the smallest child that walks could keep up with us.

"But we must keep on," I said. "Look, I do not like the sky."

"No, we do not like the sky," said every one.

Clouds began to cross the sun, and there was more and more wind, and everywhere over the ice the smoke of the snow was rising.

We kept on and soon struck young ice. Then we had to go very fast, for it would bend with our weight—if we stopped we would have broken through. From this young ice we struck smooth old ice once more. Still we travelled fast, though the wind was stronger, and there was no blue left in the sky; for now the snow-smoke filled the world, and our three sledges had to keep close together or we might lose one another.

I did not like this wind. It might part the ice, for it blew off the land. Darkness came early, so filled was the sky with the flying snow, and we were tired and stumbled.

"It is enough," I said.

"*Ae*," said every one.

Our igloo walls were thick, but we could hear the wind. After we finished eating the red meat and lay down to sleep, we could hear it more. We wondered how far we still were from the big island.

"It is strange that with all this wind we can hear no growling in the sea. The ice must be very strong," I said.

We did not speak more words, for sleep was heavy in our eyes.

I awoke suddenly—why, I do not know. I could hear big roars of the wind, but no growling from the sea. I thought I would trim the moss wicks of our seal-oil lamp. This I was doing when, quick, it began coming toward me—one long louder and louder roar. Under me there was much trembling. The ice was parting. It cut our igloo in two! The lamp fell. There was no light.

"Hold on to each other!" I yelled in the darkness. "Hold on to each other or we are lost!"

The dogs were howling, the children crying, and there were screams from my head wife. I could not see it, but open water was at my feet.

"Are we all together?" I cried.

"No, we are not together, we are not together!" It was my head wife.

The others had already drifted off. I could barely hear them—my young wife, Annunglung's wife, one of his and two of my young children and my second eldest son. Then their calling died away. We listened—we called again—but we could only hear the roaring of the storm.

It was black with darkness, and I had to walk from one to another feeling their hands. We stumbled in our walking and fell down, but we held hands and got into the hollow of some big blocks of ice. When the light came into the sky we tried to see across the open water but it was covered with thick smoking from the cold. I was glad we could not see, for we could do nothing if we did see, and my wife still had her fits of screaming.

I went off to where our igloo had been standing. Everything, all but one sledge, was gone—all that we owned: the willow mats, the deer-skins, the stone pots, the stone lamp for our snow melting, all my knives, spears, harpoons. Then a thought struck me and I was truly frightened. I called out to my wife, "The stones, the stones, have you got them?"

She stood still, looking frightened. Quickly her hands went to the pouch in her *kooletah*. For a long time she was feeling. Then at last, "Yes, Comock," she said, "I've got them."

They were the stones to make the sparks for our fires.

Then I said, "There will not be time for grieving now. Everything is gone. We have only one sledge, my ivory knife with which to cut the snow blocks for our igloo building, and your stones for fire-making."

My wife said, "It is well, Comock, we have something."

"Yes," I said, "but no spears, no harpoons—we cannot kill bear—we cannot kill seal."

"There are the dogs," my wife said. "We can eat them."

"Ae," I said, "there are the dogs."

"Ae," said every one.

For one moon we were on the broken ice, drifting—we drifted one way many days—we drifted another way many days. It made us feel small to drift in this foolish way upon the sea.

We shared with our dogs the dog meat upon which we lived. "The meat of dogs does not keep one warm like the meat of the seal," some one said.

"The dogs will bear watching," said some one else, "what with all the children and we with no spears to kill."

"There are some dogs we will have to tie up," said my wife. "The dogs upon which we live are the weaker dogs—the dangerous are those that are strong."

"We must have patience with the dogs," I said, "even if they try to kill, for we will need our dogs even more than fire if we ever come upon land again."

There was another storm and for a long time we could not see. But when the snow cleared from the sky we saw the edge of our ice breaking high upon something. It was land.

"This must be the big island," said my wife.

"Yes," I said.

When we got to this land we built an igloo, and in the darkness, for we had no lamp, we lay down to sleep.

"It is funny," said some one, "the land is so still."

For a long time we could not sleep because the land was so still.

There was much hunting to find good stones with which to make weapons. We searched far, though we were all weak, and we finally found them, and my young sons found a piece of driftwood. I made a knife of the stones and a spearhead, and we cut the driftwood, so at last we had a harpoon. Every one laughed and said they had seen better harpoons.

Next morning I took my leader dog to find a breathing hole of the seal. Not far out on the ice he stopped and smelled a hole. There I waited all day until the seal had made his rounds of his breathing holes, and at last the bubbles of his breathing began to rise in my hole. Then I killed the seal with my harpoon.

There was darkness in the igloo when I clubbed my way against the dogs through the long tunnel, dragging my seal. Every one made noise and the dogs in the tunnel made much noise. There was talking and laughing and my wife soon got oil from the seal and from her stones struck fire. At last there was light and every one could see every one else smiling. The seal which lay before us was a big one, and we kept on eating and sleeping and eating again. It was all mixed up together.

We made more knives and better ones in the forthcoming days, and more harpoons—and on all these days there were seals.

“The dogs do not show their ribs now,” said my wife, “and did you ever see such strong children? But it would be good to have new soft deerskins for clothing.”

We hunted many days. All the way there were bear

and seals, and at last we saw deer. We made our kill and my wife got the skins for our clothing.

The days now were all light. The ice was scattering on the sea, and the warm sun bared the ground. The big birds that honk came up from the south and they nested round the edges of the lakes. In time they lost the feathers of their wings. Then we ran them down and caught them.

From driftwood and sealskins we made a *kayak*¹ and I hunted the little islands off the shore, and on some there were walrus. From their tusks we got ivory for our sledge shoeing, ivory for our snow knives, ivory for our harpoons and ivory for needles for my wife.

During the warmest days of summer we were camped along a river in which there were many salmon. One day we had just finished fishing when our children came running to us. Their eyes were big and they were saying, "A monster has come up from the sea, and it is lying on the shore."

They led us to it. Its black holes looked like eyes. It had been shoved far up from the water by the ice. It was very old, as I could see by the moss and the whiteness of its wood. My wife did not like to go near.

"Something might come out of the holes," she said.

"Don't be foolish," I said, but she hung behind.

With Annunglung and my sons I climbed up on it, and all of that ship was good wood—enough to make the runners for sledges and handles for spears and harpoons for ten times more people than there are fingers on my hands. We found pots of iron, and best of all we found axes and knives.

¹ A canoe.

"We are rich," I said.

"Yes," said my wife, "we are rich, but if only the rest of our people were with us, they would have everything, too. We could all be happy together."

"We can't have everything," I said. "No one has everything."

"But if only I could have those that went off on the ice," said my wife. "When the storms come I cannot keep their calling out of my ears. I am sure that I can hear them."

Our second winter on the island was a good winter, but my wife talked more of the hunger she had for our old land and for our people.

The oldest of my sons was growing big. He was almost a man and he was learning fast in his *kayak*. He was good at his hunting and had already killed his first deer.

One night—it was winter again and he had been away two days with Annunglung on the ice out at sea—he came into our igloo with his first seal. We could not believe he could kill such a big seal.

"Yes," said Annunglung, "there was much fighting, but he killed him. When the seal came to its breathing hole he stood up and struck down with his harpoon. The seal dived so fast with his line that he was pulled to the ice. But he had the end of his line wrapped around him where he lay over the hole. I got him to his feet, but he was pulled down again and again. At last he was mostly on his feet and pulled in more and more line, and then it came easy. The seal was dead."

My son said that anyone could have killed such a

seal—a child could have killed, almost, such a seal. My wife said, “Lie down beside it—it’s longer than you.”

But my son said, “My dogs, they are hungry.”

He crawled out of the tunnel with all the children behind him, and my wife turned to me and said, “Comock, our son is now a hunter.”

“No,” I said, “but maybe he will be before the end of this winter—there is still his first walrus, and there is still his first bear.”

During the moon of the shortest days Annunglung began to stay at home—something had come over him. He never spoke. He would sit in the igloo all day, just looking.

One night we came home with two big seals and there was Annunglung sitting and saying nothing. I saw by my wife’s face that she was frightened. She whispered to me, “Comock, you must not leave me and my young children here alone again. I am frightened. Have you seen his eyes?”

“No,” I said.

“You must see his eyes,” she said.

When we sat down to our eating, we could not help looking at Annunglung, who did not sit with us but sat near the lamp, not even eating the seal meat we had put into his hand.

“Annunglung, are you not hungry?” I asked.

He looked up and the light of the lamp was in his eyes. The meat in my mouth stood still, and truly I was frightened, for the little black balls of his eyes had grown so small.

I told my sons to go alone to the hunt. I hid

Annunglung's spears and harpoons. His knives, my wife said, he always keeps under his sleeping mat. I hid them too.

There were many days of storms. My sons brought home no seals.

We grew hungry.

"Let our sons stay at home," my wife said. "You go for a seal this time." I stayed away two days, but the storms were too heavy. I could do no hunting. The night was half done when I did come home, and late though it was there was a bright light shining through the ice window. Then I knew something was wrong. When I crawled into the igloo my wife was sitting up and there was fright on her face, and my sons were sitting up and they were frightened, too. Annunglung was sitting like a stone, but there was that in his eyes that told me that three men would not be strong enough to hold him.

We took turns sitting and watching all that night and all the next day, and I tried to think what I would have to do.

ROBERT FLAHERTY,
The Grim, Gallant Story of Comock the Eskimo
(Condensed from a B.B.C. broadcast)

MAN-HUNT

IN *Rogue Male*, by Geoffrey Household, a famous but anonymous sportsman, skilled in field craft and a first-class shot, determines to stalk the dictator of a foreign country. By superlative skill he evades all the guards and gets into a position where, if he pulls the trigger, he will almost certainly be able to shoot his quarry. At this critical moment he is captured, but later manages to escape out of the country and returns to England.

Because of possible international political complications he is unable to seek the protection of the police, even when he realizes that secret agents of the dictator have followed him to England. When in desperation he is compelled to get rid of one of his enemies he finds himself in the unenviable position of being pursued by the British police as well.

He manages to get down to Dorset, and makes a hide-out in a sunken lane covered with dense undergrowth. He lives there undetected for some time, his sole companion being a wild cat, which he names Asmodeus.

Unfortunately, on one of his journeys into the nearest village he is recognized by the post-mistress as a wanted man. Dashing out of the post office, he jumps on to a passing bus with the knowledge that within a very short time all the Dorsetshire police will be at his heels.

THE police were at the cross-roads ten minutes after I got off the bus. Neither they nor the postmistress's daughter had wasted any time. They switched the head-lights of two cars into the spinney where I was, and crashed into the undergrowth.

The immediate future didn't worry me at all. It was already dusk, and I knew that in the dark I could pass through a multitude of policemen and possibly take their boots off as well. I moved quietly away in front of them until I had to break cover, either by crossing the road or taking to the downs on the west. I didn't want to cross the road—it meant that I should lead the chase into my own country—nor was there any point in stealing away into unknown difficulties. I decided to stay in contact with this lot of police—about five couple of them there were—so I jumped on to the stone wall that bounded the spinney and pretended to remain there indecisively. At last one of them saw me and gave a holla. I broke away into Devonshire down a long barren slope.

I was magnificently fit as a result of my life in the open and the brisk autumn air. I remember how easily my muscles answered the call I made on them. By God, in all this immobility and carrion thought¹ it does me good to think of the man I was!

I intended to lie still wherever there was a scrap of not too obvious cover and to let the hunt pass me; but I didn't reckon on a young and active inspector who shed his overcoat and seemed able to do the quarter-mile in well under sixty seconds. As we neared the bottom

¹ The writer implies that since these adventures he has grown sluggish and fat.

of the slope I had no chance of playing hide-and-seek in the gorse or vanishing into a hedge. The lead of a hundred and fifty yards, which, in the gathering dusk, I had considered ample for my purpose had been reduced to fifty.

I had to keep running—either for a gate that led into another open field, or a gate beyond which I saw a muddy farm-track with water faintly gleaming in the deep hoof-marks. I chose the mud, and vaulted the gate into eighteen inches of it. I was bogged, but so would he be, and then endurance could count; he wouldn't be able to give me any more cinder-track stuff. I pounded along the track, spattering as much mud as a horse over myself and the hedges. He was now twenty yards behind, and wasting his breath by yelling at me to stop and come quietly.

While he was still in the wet clay and the rest of the police had just entered it, I pulled out on to hard surface. The wall of a farmhouse loomed up ahead; it was built in the usual shape of an 'E' without the centre bar, the house at the back, the barns forming the two wings. It seemed an excellent place for the police to surround and search; they would be kept busy for the next few hours, and the cordon between Lyme Regis and Beaminster, through which I had to pass, would be relaxed.

I looked back. The inspector had dropped back a little; the rest of the hunt I could hear plunging and cursing in the mud. I put on a spurt and dashed round the lower bar of the 'E.' Knowing the general lay-out of English farms, I was sure that my wanted patch of not too obvious cover would be right at the corner, and

it was. I dropped flat on my face in a pattern of mounds and shadows. I couldn't see myself or what they consisted. My head landed in a manure heap with a smell of disinfectant—they had probably been dosing the sheep for worms—and my elbow on an old millstone; there were hurdles and firewood; the dominating shadow was that of an old mounting-block.

The inspector raced round the corner after me and into the open barns, flashing his light on the carts, the piles of fodder, and the cider barrels. As soon as he passed me I shot out of the yard, crouching and silent, and dropped against the outer wall. I hadn't any luck in minor matters. This time I put my face in a patch of nettles.

The police, a full half-minute behind us, dashed into the yard, rallying to their inspector. He was shouting to them to "come on, boys," that he had the beggar cornered. The farm and its dogs woke up to the fact that there was a criminal in their midst, and I left the police to their search; it was probably long and exhausting, for there was not, from their point of view, the remotest possibility of my escaping from the three-side trap into which I had run.

I had no intention of going home. There could be no peace for me in the lane until I had laid a false scent and knew that the police were following it to the exclusion of all others.

First: I had to make a false hiding-place and satisfy the police that there I had lived, so that they wouldn't do too thorough a search between Beaminster and Lyme Regis.

Second: I must persuade the police that I had left the district for good.

I followed the main road, along which I had come in the bus, back towards Lyme Regis. I say I followed it—I had to, since I wasn't sure of my direction in the dark—but I didn't walk on it. I moved parallel, climbing a fence or forcing a hedge about every two hundred yards for three solid miles. It's a major feat of acrobatics to follow a main road without ever setting foot on it, and I began to feel infernally tired.

The high ground to the east of Beaminster, where a new den had to be faked, was twenty miles away. I decided to jump a lorry on the steep hill between Lyme Regis and Charmouth, where I could be pretty sure of getting a lift unknown to the driver.

A mile or so outside the town, I cut down into a valley and up the other side towards the steep hairpin bend where heavy traffic had to slow to walking-pace. I had thought this an ingenious and original scheme, but the police, more mechanically-minded than myself, had thought of it already. At the steepest part of the road was a sergeant with a bicycle, keeping careful watch.

I cursed him heartily and silently, for now I had to go down again to the bottom of the valley, draw him off and return to the road. My knees were very heavy, but there was nothing else for it. I stood in a little copse at the bottom and started yelling blue murder in a terrified soprano—"Help!" and "Let me go!" and "God, won't anybody come!" and then a succession of hysterical screams that were horrible to hear and quite false. The screams of a terrified woman are rhythmical and wholly unnatural, and had I imitated them correctly the sergeant would have thought me a ghost or some fool yodelling.

I heard the whine of brakes hastily applied, and several dim figures ran down into the valley as I ran up. I peered over the hedge. The sergeant had gone. A grocer's van and a sports car stood empty by the side of the road. I gave up my original idea of boarding a lorry and took the sports car. I reckoned that I should have the safe use of it for at least twenty minutes—ten minutes before the party gave up their search of the wooded bottom, five minutes before they could reach a telephone and ten more minutes before patrols and police cars could be warned.

Over my head and round my beard I wrapped my muffler. Then I pulled out in front of a noisy milk-truck that was banging up the hill, in case the owner should recognize the engine of his own car. It was a fine car. I did the nine twisting miles to Bridport in eleven minutes and ten miles along the Dorchester road in ten minutes. I hated that speed at the time, and I'm ashamed of it. No driver has a right to average more than forty; if he wants to terrify his fellows there are always a few wars going on, and either side will be glad to let him indulge his pleasure and get some healthy exercise at the same time.

Three miles from Dorchester I turned to the left and abandoned the car in a neglected footpath, no wider than itself, between high hedges. I stuck ten pounds in the owner's licence with pencilled apologies (written in block capitals with my left hand) and my sincere hope that the notes would cover his night's lodgings and any incidental loss.

It was now midnight. I crossed the down, slunk unseen round a village and entered the Sydling Valley,

which, by the map, appeared to be as remote a dead-end as any in Dorset. I spent the rest of the night in a covered stack, sleeping warmly and soundly between the hay and the corrugated iron. The chances of the police finding the car till daylight were negligible.

After breakfast of blackberries, I struck north along the watershed. There was a main road a quarter of a mile to the west. I watched the posting of constables at two crossings. Down in the valley a police car was racing towards Sydling. They made no attempt to watch the grass tracks, being convinced, I think, that criminals from London never go far from roads. No doubt Scotland Yard had exact statistics showing what my next move would be. My theft of a car had put me into the proper gangster pigeon-hole—from their point of view, a blatant, self-advertising gangster.

The downs on both sides of the Sydling Valley were country after my own heart: patches of gorse and patches of woodland, connected by straggling hedges which gave me cover from occasional shepherd or farmer but were not thick enough to compel me to climb them. I assumed that all high ground had been picqueted and reckoned—unnecessarily, I expect—on field glasses as well as eyes.

The valley ended in a great bowl of turf and woodland, crossed by no road, and two miles from the village. Dry bottoms ran up from the head of the valley like the sticks of a fan. In any one of them I might very reasonably have been camping since September.

That which I chose had a wood of hazel on one side and of oak on the other. Between them the brown bracken grew waist high, and through the bracken ran

a ride of turf upon which the rabbits were feeding and playing. The glade smelt of fox, turf and rabbit, the sweet musk that lingers in dry valleys where the dew is heavy and the water flows a few feet underground. The only signs of humanity were two ruined cottages, some bundles of cut hazel rods, and a few cartridge cases scattered about the turf.

On the green track that led to the cottages tall thistles grew unbroken, showing that few ever passed that way. The gardens had been swamped by wild vegetation, but an apple-tree was bearing fruit in spite of the bramble and ivy which grabbed at the low, heavily-laden branches. That invaded tree and garden reminded me of the tropics.

The cottages were roofless, but in one was a hearth that ran two feet back into the thick masonry. I built a rough wall of fallen stone around it and succeeded in making a fairly convincing nest for a fugitive, drier and more airy than my own but not so safe. While I was working I saw no one but a farmer riding through the bracken on the opposite ridge. I knew what he was looking for—a cow that had just calved. I had run across her earlier in the day and had been encouraged by this sure sign that the farm was large and full of cover.

When night fell I lit a fire, piling it fiercely up the chimney so that the ash and soot would appear the result of many fires. While it burned I lay in the hazel wood, in case anyone should be attracted by the light and smoke. Then I sat over the ashes dozing and shivering till dawn. I was still wearing my town suit, inadequate for the cold and mist of an October night.

It was hard to make the place look as if I had lived

there for weeks. I distributed widely and messily the corpse of a rabbit that was polluting the atmosphere a little way up the valley. I fouled and trampled the interior of the cottage, stripped the apple-tree, and strewed apple-cores and nutshells over the ground. A pile of feathers from a wood pigeon and a rook provided further evidence of my diet. Plucking the ancient remains of a hawk's dinner was the nastiest job of all.

I spent the day sitting in the bracken and waiting for the police, but they refused to find me. Possibly they thought I had made for the coast. There was, after all, no earthly reason why I should be in the Sydling Valley more than anywhere else. I put the night to good use. First I collected a dozen empty tins from a rubbish heap and piled them in a corner of the cottage; then I went down to sleeping Sydling and did a smash-and-grab raid on the village shop. My objects were to draw the attention of those obstinate police, and to get hold of some dried fish. In this sporting county some fool was sure to try bloodhounds on my scent.

In the few seconds at my disposal I couldn't find any kippers or bloaters, but I did get four tins of sardines and a small bag of fertiliser. I raced for the downs while the whole village squawked and muttered and slammed its doors. It was probably the first time in all the history of Sydling that a sudden noise had been heard at night.

As soon as I was back in my cottage I pounded the sardines and fertiliser together, tied up the mixture in the bag, and rubbed the corner of the hearth where I had sat and the wall I had built. Trailing the bag on the

end of a string, I laid a drag through the hazels, over the heather on the hill-top, round the oak wood and into the bracken overlooking the cottage. There I remained and got some sleep.

In spite of all the assistance I had given them it was nearly midday before the police discovered the cottages. They moved around in them as respectfully as in church, dusting all likely surfaces for finger-prints. There weren't any. I had never taken off my gloves. They must have thought they were dealing with an experienced criminal.

Half an hour later a police car came bumping over the turf and decanted an old friend of mine into the cottages. I had quite forgotten that he was now Chief Constable of Dorset. If he had looked closely at those feathers he would have seen at once that a hawk, not a man, had done the killing; but naturally he was leaving the criminology to Scotland Yard, and they weren't likely to go into the fine point of whether the birds had met their death through the plumage of back or breast.

The dry bottom began to look like a meet of the Cattistock. The couple of bloodhounds that I had expected turned up, towing a bloodthirsty maiden lady in their wake. She was encouraging them with yawps and had feet so massive that I could see them clearly at two hundred yards—great brogued boats navigating a green sea. She was followed by half the village of Sydling and a sprinkling of local gentry. Two fellows had turned out on horseback. I felt they should have paid me the compliment of pink coats.

Away went the bloodhounds on the trail of the

fertilized sardines, and away I went too; I had a good half hour's law¹ while they followed my bag through the hazels and heather. I crossed the main road—a hasty dash from ditch to ditch while the constable on watch was occupied with the distant beauty of the sea—and slid along the hedges into a great headland of gorse above Cattistock. There I wove so complicated a pattern that boat-footed Artemis must have thought her long-eared darlings were on the line of a hare. I skirted Cattistock and heard their lovely carillon most appropriately chime *D'ye ken John Peel* at my passage, followed by *Lead, Kindly Light*. It was half-past five and the dusk was falling. I waded into the Frome, passed under the Great Western Railway and paddled upstream for a mile or so, taking cover in the rushes whenever there was anyone to see me. Then I buried the sardines in the gravel at the bottom of the river, and proceeded under my own scent.

I have not the faintest idea what hounds can or cannot do on the trail of a man. I doubt if they could have run on my true scent from the cottages to my lane, but I had to guard against the possibility. Looking back on those two days, it cheers me to see the healthy insolence in all I did.

I moved slowly westwards, following the lanes but taking no risks—slowly, deliberately slowly, in the technique that I have developed since I became an outlaw. It was nearly four in the morning when I swung myself on to the elm branch that did duty as my front door, and climbed down into the lane. I felt Asmodeus brush against my legs but I could not see

¹ Freedom from pursuit.

him in that safe pit of blackness. . . . Darkness is safety only on condition that all one's enemies are human.

I ate a tremendous breakfast of beef and oatmeal, and set aside my town suit to be made into bags and lashings—all it was now good for. I was relieved to be done with it; it reminded me too forcibly of the newspapers' well-dressed man. Then I slipped into my bag, unwearing, damp-proof citadel of luxury, and slept till nightfall.

GEOFFREY HOUSEHOLD,
Rogue Male

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

FINDING civilized life and his normal surroundings both irksome and unpleasant, Mr Lucton has tried to shake off his identity. The healthy exercise of walking long distances and the excitement of escaping detection prove irresistibly attractive. His adventures bring him into contact with a variety of people living in the borderlands between England and Wales. At times he finds himself in a most discouraging predicament—for what can be worse than being hailed as a redoubtable cricketer when you have neither the skill nor the inclination to bat, bowl, or field, and you happen to be wearing an Authentics'¹ tie?

“HERE we are,” the old man said. “This is my rectory, and there’s my church, and there’s my cricket-ground.” He pointed proudly to a flat field with a large square of close-cut sward roped-off in the middle of it. “The out-field’s a bit rough, but the wicket’s not bad, though a bit on the sporting side. It oughtn’t to be bad: I’ve looked after that turf for forty-nine years. I never knew the day when it wouldn’t take spin. Now you can get a wash before luncheon while I go and change. When you’ve finished, you can go into the study and read *The Times*.”

¹ Oxford University Authentics’ colours are red, gold, and blue.

He thrust Mr Lucton into a narrow passage divided by a pitch-pine screen into two compartments: a rod- (or gun-) room and a lavatory. The outer was so dark and so thickly infested with 'sporting' implements, shot-guns, and deer-stalking rifles; fishing-rods of many lengths and descriptions; gaffs, telescopic and fixed; walking-sticks and shooting-seats, waders, brogues, creels, decoy-pigeons, landing-nets, gum-boots, jacks, cricket-bats and pads—to say nothing of festoons of lines dressed and undressed, hung out like lianas¹ in a tropical forest between the shelves on either side of the impeded fairway to dry—that he knocked several of them over before he reached the inner chamber.

Even here an overflow of similar junk restricted his movements. He picked his way through it cautiously, trailing behind him a spinning-trace armed with triangle-hooks, which his coat-sleeve had picked up on the way, and found himself face to face with an apparition—his own image reflected in a cracked mirror above the old-fashioned wash-hand-stand. This was the first time Mr Lucton had seen himself since the day when he had glanced at his reflection in the showcase at Malvern. The effect was no less encouraging than surprising. He was pleased to find himself by no means a bad-looking fellow: the loss of his grizzled moustache had reduced his apparent age by at least eight years; his eyes looked clearer than before, and the week's exposure had given his features, which had been lax and puffy, the bronzed, sinewy air of an active countryman's.

Though the borrowed trousers still resisted every attempt to make the button at the top, his waist was

¹ A kind of twining plant.

certainly slimmer, and the Harris coat, for all its age, looked well-cut and was strictly in keeping with his present surroundings. What pleased him even more was the effect of the Authentics tie. That he had no right to wear it, and that it was the cause of the equivocal position in which he now found himself, did not detract from the fact that it not merely suited him, but completed what was already a most effective disguise, in which he doubted if any of his friends could possibly recognize him. He found it hard, indeed, to recognize himself.

Fortified by this cheering discovery, he made his way to the study and waited with confidence for his host. The room so closely reflected its owner's personality that it might almost be said to have absorbed a part of it. It was, like the Rector, a mid-Victorian museum-piece, from the frayed red carpet to the macramé-fringed mantelshelf; from the deep maroon curtains, edged with chenille, to the hanging oil-lamp with its shade of opaline glass; from the flowered wallpaper to the embroidered carpet-slippers propped-up by the heavy brass fender. The wallspace above and on either side of the fire-breast was thickly hung with faded photographs of college cricket-teams, two emblazoned shields—one representing the University of Cambridge and the other Trinity Hall—and a number of others supporting moth-eaten trophies of the chase—masks, brushes, and rudders of otters and foxes, and the swollen, supercilious face of an unfortunate hare which had lost its whiskers after being bowled over (as Mr Lucton discovered) the year before he was born.

What attracted him more than these was the range of

built-in mahogany bookshelves on the opposite walls. These were crammed not only with sporting and theological works and a considerable well-worn library of the classics, but, also, with a haphazard but representative selection of poetry, essays, and fiction covering a period which began in the eighteen-seventies and ended, abruptly, at the date of the Boer War. They were the choice, one felt, of an eager and lively mind which, for some unknown reason, had become crystallized in middle age, and, thereafter, discarded all intellectual curiosity. Yet, in spite of these tokens of deterioration (if the hard word were justified), this comfortable room was that of a man whose life, in its prime, had been cultured and civilized in a manner to which Mr Lucton still wistfully aspired. It had acquired the patina of prolonged and peaceful habitation.

Among those books (so many of which he wished he had read); in those snug carpet-slippers; at that orderly desk, with its pipe-rack of seasoned briars and ample tobacco-jar, where the summer breeze, warm with sunshine and charged with wafts of roses and honeysuckle, stirred the torn lace curtains and fluttered the folded *Times*, the sheets of blank sermon-paper and the pages of an open diary blissfully innocent of engagements; in that ancient aura of homely-scented tobacco-smoke with which the whole room was impregnated; a man who had taken his fill of the world and learnt wisdom might well do worse than spend his declining days in virtuous indolence. Happy was the nation, men said, that had no history. Happy was the man, Mr Lucton thought, whose serious history had been written, whose struggles were over, who had earned the right not

to put away childish things, but to return to them without any guilty consciousness of levity. A counsel of resignation? At heart Mr Lucton did not feel resigned. The bronzed, well-set-up, clean-shaven man whose reflection had lately startled and encouraged him had no business to feel resigned. He was, perhaps, still a trifle disorientated, a little tired. This mood would pass.

His host, returning, broke in on it. He had exchanged his shabby tweeds and clerical collar for a pair of extremely shrunken flannel trousers, yellow with age, which had once been white, a shirt of the same hue open at the neck to disclose a scraggy throat, and a faded Crusader blazer.

"Ha, here we are!" he roared heartily. "Had a look at *The Times*? Any news? How's Worcestershire doin'? A promisin' team, but unequal. Wants a couple of openin' batsmen to stiffen it. Not that county cricket's worth worryin' about nowadays. All this scramblin' for points. . . ."

Mr Lucton, excusing his lack of interest in things that mattered, pointed to the bookshelves. The old man laughed and nodded.

"Interested in books, are you? Ha. . . . Never buy any now. Can't afford it, what with income-tax and the rest. When I was a young man I wasted a lot of time and money on them; but now, though you'd hardly believe it, I've no time for readin'." He laughed. The grizzled face, with its ruddy cheeks, had a charming innocence. "If I open a book at night, it sends me to sleep, and by the time I've finished a page I've forgotten what it's about, so what's the use of it, ha? By the way, do you want me to fit you up with a pair of bags?"

Mr Lucton revealed the significant gap at the top of his trousers.

"Ah, I see you'd never get into mine. Well, what does it matter? The game's the thing. But, mind you, a man of your age ought to take more care of his figure. Ten minutes of exercise every morning before your cold tub. That's what you want, my boy. By the way, I've been thinking things over. If we win the toss I shall put you in first. All you'll need to do is to stick in and take the edge off the fast bowling. They've a young fellow named Perkins who's really quick for three overs. And you'd better field silly mid-on when I bowl. They've one or two hardish hitters, and it frightens these village lads when the fielders stand in to them."

Mr Lucton's heart sank. He had been hoping to be put in last and to be allowed to hide his lamentable fielding somewhere in the deep.

"It's a long time since I played cricket," he timidly suggested. "So if you don't mind . . ."

The old man nodded approvingly.

"That's it, that's it. I knew you wouldn't. Frightens the life out of 'em. You didn't hear a gong, did you? It's time we had luncheon. Just ring the bell, will you?"

Mr Lucton tugged at a porcelain bell-pull. He heard the wires scrape, but no following tinkle. Yet, somehow or other, the signal must have been conveyed; for a moment later, a flustered old woman in a white apron and a cap with streamers announced that luncheon was served.

The old gentleman certainly did himself well. The food, for which Mr Lucton felt himself more than ready, was delicious: a dish of Wye trout, fried golden-

brown in oatmeal; a home-cured ham, golden too, which the parson carved wafer-thin with a knife worn fine by half-a-century of expert sharpening; cream cheese, with crisp, but not overgrown, lettuce, and home-baked bread, made of stone-ground flour from Kington's mill and barm from the brewery at Builth. In addition to this, the old man had brought up from the cellar a bottle of *Château Latour*, which, while he was changing, had been set out in a basket on the sunny dining-room window-sill to acquire the perfect degree of mellowness. He was reasonably proud of his cellar.

"Thought the occasion worthy of a bottle, my boy, ha?" he said. "It's not every day one has the privilege of losin' a fish in water as low and clear as that."

The wine was, in fact, rather above Mr Lucton's palate; but he drank more than his share of it gratefully, in the hope of raising his courage to face the ordeal that lay ahead. The old man talked of nothing but 'varsity cricket—a subject in which Mr Lucton's enthusiasm exceeded his knowledge. Out of respect for his guest's supposed origins, he spoke mostly of Oxford.

"Were H. K. Foster and Charles Fry up in your day? No, no, what am I thinking of? They must be a bit older than you. But Tip Foster might have been there. He was the best of the bunch. A terrible tragedy, that! I must look you up in Wisden. . . ."

It was fortunate that, whatever questions he asked, he never waited for answers, cheerfully accepting the certainty that he couldn't hear them. It was for this reason and no other that—with tactful smiles and non-committal mutterings and emphatic nods of assent to everything that wasn't a question—Mr Lucton contrived

to steer clear of the humiliating *dénouement* which he felt was his due. By the end of the meal, indeed, the admirable claret had done its work so thoroughly that he no longer feared it. The old man was so gay and confiding, so pleased by the prospect of a close game, that it would have been unkind to disillusion him, and as long as this Dutch courage lasted he felt himself fit to face any fast bowler in the world.

Unluckily, it didn't last nearly so long as he had hoped, and by the time they reached the pavilion its effect had completely evaporated. In this new light the whole scene—the church with its elms, the friendly rectory, the green width of the field in the middle of which the wickets had already been pitched—assumed the threatening atmosphere of a bad dream. His host, who had left him for a moment to talk with his parson friend, the opposing captain, returned to startle him out of this unhappy state.

"I've won the toss," he said. "Hurry up and get your pads on, and see that you get a good pair of gloves: that fellow Perkins is playing. I'm glad you're here to take the first ball, my boy. My friend Hallows, the Vicar of Felindre, who's our regular Number One, ain't turned up. Been off fishin' this week-end. Car broken down, I expect."

If the Vicar of Felindre's car were anything like his colleague's, Mr Lucton reflected, that wasn't improbable.

"What about boots? I'd forgotten that," the old man was saying.

Mr Lucton showed him that his were soled with crêpe.

"That's all right—but be careful not to slip when you're running," he said.

Mr Lucton felt doubtful if there would be any running. In a blacker extension of the same nightmare he put on his pads and accepted a bat which was handed to him. The umpires were out, and the opposing team were throwing each other catches and taking them with an expertness he knew he could never emulate. They were so gay and careless about it that he couldn't help feeling they knew his secret and were chuckling over his approaching discomfiture. He found himself walking out to the wicket side by side with the red-faced young farmer with whom they had almost collided at the turn in the lane. To Mr Lucton, this journey seemed endless, the intervening space horrible in its emptiness. His hands were clammy with sweat inside his batting-gloves, and the bat itself seemed leaden and badly-balanced. He heard his companion speaking.

"This here Jim Perkins," he said, "By all accounts he's a proper beggar—if you'll pardon the word, sir. They say he can't last more than three or four overs; but he's liable to bump 'em more than a bit, so you'd better look out for some body-line stuff at the first go-off."

Mr Lucton would have liked to ask this expert how he should deal with the problem; but by this time they were nearing the wicket, and there was no time for consultation. With a fluttering pulse and a feeling of giddiness, he walked to the crease and took guard, while the opposing captain, who looked almost as old as his friend the rector, but was clean-shaven, tossed the ball to a spidery youth with a shock of red hair and excessively long arms, like an anthropoid ape's.

Mr Lucton took heart at this. Such a frail creature as this could hardly be the redoubtable Perkins, whom his anxious eyes had already identified in the shape of a black low-browed giant who spat on his hands and glared at him from first slip. The bowler paced out a long run and paused for a second. In the next, he had leapt into the air and flung himself forward through it like a high-speed projectile. Mr Lucton had a momentary vision of tossing red hair and a flushed face twisted into a grimace of ferocious hostility. He could not see the ball nor even guess at its flight until the bat was almost wrenched from his hands and the invisible missile went streaking away through the slips to the boundary. From the pavilion he heard an encouraging bellow: "Well hit, sir! Well hit!" Four runs. . . . Without being aware of it, he had broken his duck.

The second ball was well pitched-up to the off. As it passed, Mr Lucton made a half-hearted jab at it, only to discover that it had already reached the wicket-keeper's hands. The third, a short one, rose and whizzed by his left ear; the fourth shaved the seat of his trousers and went for four byes: the 'sporting' wicket was showing what it could do. While the fielder ran to search for the ball in the hedge behind the boundary, Harry Kington advanced to the middle of the pitch and began to pat it solicitously with the flat of his bat. Mr Lucton felt it was incumbent on himself, as an expert, to do likewise. As they stooped together, his partner whispered hoarsely.

"You didn't ought to go nibbling at them short ones," he said. "If you'll pardon my saying so, sir, you'd ought

to leave them alone. That's what makes these quick beggars savage."

Mr Lucton was not at all sure that he wanted to make the red-headed fury more savage than he was already. However, Kington, no doubt, knew what he was talking about. As for "nibbling at them short ones"—there was no time to explain that all lengths were alike to him and that he had no intention of hitting the ball if he could possibly avoid it, being engaged in the unpromising task of trying to keep it from hitting him. He returned to the crease determined, so far as he could, to leave well—and ill—alone.

The trouble was that the accursed Perkins wouldn't leave *him* alone. The next ball, an in-swinging of which he caught a brief glimpse, appeared to be flying straight at the pit of his stomach, but failed to rise, and—despite (or rather because of) his attempts to avoid it—came to rest with a brutal thud on the fleshy part of his unprotected calf. Through a blur of pain, he heard Jim Perkins's triumphant yell:

"How's *that*?"

"Thank God!" Mr Lucton thought. "I'm out."

He picked up himself and the bat he had dropped, and started to limp away from the wicket. Harry Kington's voice recalled him.

"It's all right. Come back! You're not out, sir."

Mr Lucton gazed at the umpire appealingly.

"Look here, I *was* out, you know. I'm perfectly sure I was."

"If you was out, I'd 'ave guv you out," the umpire answered indignantly. "And if you think as I don't know my job . . ." He turned on Jim Perkins: "You

ought to know better than go appealing like that, Jim. L.b.w., my face! The poor beggar 'ad got 'alf way to square leg before you 'it 'im. Backed into it: that's what 'e done."

Mr Lucton was not merely hurt but angry now. The next ball was the last one of the over, and he had no intention of waiting to let it hit him. As the bowler hurled himself up to the crease he rushed out to meet him. He slashed at the ball in mid-air and, to his own surprise, hit it.

"Come on . . . *run!*" Harry Kington shouted. "He's bound to drop it."

Mr Lucton ran like a hare. In a backward glance he saw the ball rising up and up, shooting vertically into the blue above the church-tower, so high that they had actually run one before it began to fall. He was so entranced with the magnitude of his hit that he ran full tilt into the wicket-keeper, who stood waiting calmly for the catch, and bowled him over.

"How's that, then?" Jim Perkins shouted again. "Obstructing the field."

The umpire put up his finger.

"Well, thank heaven that's over, anyway," Mr Lucton thought.

But he knew it wasn't over, alas!—it was only beginning. He had still to face his host; to account, as it were, for that excellent lunch and the bottle of *Château Latour*. Explanations? His performance explained itself only too clearly. There was nothing he could say—even if it could have been heard—which would mitigate that. This solitary return to the pavilion seemed longer and more full of foreboding

than his outward journey. It relieved him somewhat when, anxiously scanning the group of men on the boundary, he distinguished the rector's blue, black and white striped blazer hurriedly retreating toward one of the canvas screens behind the wicket. For the moment he would not have to be faced after all; but his thin old back, as he walked away, was eloquent with the scorn and disgust Mr Lucton could see undisguised in the eyes of the players in front of him. Not that he cared what they thought of him, or needed their sympathy. All he wanted to do was to get off his pads and see what sort of a mess that red-headed devil had made of his calf.

With a glowering face he limped up to the pavilion rails, where the incoming batsman sat hurriedly tightening the straps of his pads. No doubt he was the Vicar of Felindre, whose car had broken down. He rose, and Mr Lucton stood aside to make way for him. Their eyes met; and immediately Mr Lucton forgot his angry humiliation and the pain in his battered calf. He was face to face with danger once more. This was the hook-nosed old tyrant who had presided at the dinner-table at Llandewi. As he stared at Mr Lucton his cruel eyes narrowed, his nose appeared even more predatory, his thin lips twisted in a malicious smile.

"Hello, hello," he said with a menacing softness. "This is a surprise. I fancy we've met before, sir. We must look into this. Yes, decidedly, we must look into this."

"Met before? I don't know what you mean," Mr Lucton spluttered.

"Oh yes, yes, you do, my friend," the old man chuckled. "Ever listen in to the wireless?"

One of the umpires was bawling: "Next man in, please! Hurry up there!"

The parson picked up his bat.

"I look forward to seeing you later, Mr . . . what was it? . . . Mr Owen Lucton," he said with a sinister smile.

Mr Lucton stumped up the steps as fast as his numb leg would let him and entered the dressing-room. A lantern-jawed youth, who was waiting impatiently, demanded his pads.

"That beggar Perkins copped you all right by the look of it," he said gloomily, gazing at the livid egg-shaped swelling on Mr Lucton's calf. "He's a killer, he is. They didn't ought to play him, not on a hard wicket like this. I reckon you're lucky you're out."

Mr Lucton agreed with him fervently. He would have been luckier still, he felt, if he had never gone in. His bruise, though the pain continued to grow more acute, was a negligible matter compared with the urgent necessity of making good his escape before Perkins had dealt with the Vicar of Felindre according to his deserts. His mind was divided between his anxiety for that wicked old man to suffer the pain and humiliation he had suffered himself, and an even greater desire that he should keep up his wicket just long enough to allow him to disappear.

Mr Lucton was taking no chances. A hurried glance through the pavilion door showed him that the rector, having walked off his rage, was returning from the sight-screen with rapid strides. There was another door,

fortunately, at the back of the dressing-room. Mr Lucton turned and slipped through it. Under cover of the pavilion, he ran, as fast as his legs would take him, for a hedge that separated the cricket-field from some sort of road. As he pushed his way through it, he heard from behind him a whoop of triumph which made him look back. The Vicar of Felindre was out. Jim Perkins had bowled him. He was returning to the pavilion, Mr Lucton thought, with an unnatural haste.

There was a ramshackle four-seater touring-car left standing at the side of the road. Its back seat supported a cricket-bag, and the remainder of the space behind was crammed with a jumble of all sorts of fishing-gear and a shabby rod-box painted black, with white lettering. The owner's name was hidden by a fold of tarpaulin, but his address was easily legible: *The Vicarage, Felindre*.

At this sight Mr Lucton was tempted of the Devil. What vengeance, he asked himself, could be more just, more poetic—what means of escape more swift, more effective than to jump into that car and drive away in it? The temptation was grave. He had very nearly succumbed to it when it came to him that the mere fact of his having entertained such a lawless idea was a sign of panic. So far, in his travels, he had never transgressed the law. To have done so now would have been to make his first false step, a fatal slip which would have laid him open to arrest.

That would never do. Already this wild project had wasted valuable time. Glancing over the hedge, he saw that the Vicar of Felindre had not returned to

the pavilion to take off his pads, but had made a bee-line for his friend. Now he was talking vehemently and waving his bat, while the other old man listened with his hand to his ear. In another moment they were both of them hurrying towards the pavilion. Mr Lucton's mind worked swiftly. He knew his legs were no match for a motor-car—not even for such an old car as this. He must make pursuit impossible. On the near side, he found that the bonnet was tied down with string; on the other, fortunately, it was free. He lifted it hurriedly and turned off the petrol-tap—none too soon, for already the old men had searched the pavilion and were emerging, hot on his scent, from the dressing-room door at the back. As he raised his head, they caught sight of him over the hedge.

“There he is!” the Rector roared. “He’s getting into your car.”

Mr Lucton refastened the bonnet and ran. Looking back from a distance of fifty yards, he saw his late host bent double in the dusty roadway, wrestling with the crank, while the Vicar of Felindre shouted encouragements and instructions from the driving-seat. Remembering his lunch and the *Château Latour*, Mr Lucton's conscience was troubled. He hoped to goodness the poor old boy wouldn't strain himself. He would have liked to explain that all this excited labour was useless; that, until some expert discovered the turned-off petrol-tap, they would not start that car if they toiled till doomsday.

But this was no time for scruples or sentiment. With a parting glance of triumph mingled with commiseration, he ran, limping, on his way: past the church, past the

hospitable rectory, past the village police station—where the back-view of a red-necked constable, digging potatoes in his shirt-sleeves, made him slacken his pace—out on to a tortuous road which, so far as it had any direction, appeared to be heading for the blue line of the Radnorshire moors.

It was only when he had pressed along this for a couple of miles and gradually recovered his equanimity, that Mr Lucton began to feel something was wrong, or at any rate, missing. What he missed was the companionable weight of the bulging rucksack, which he had left hanging from the hat-stand in the hall at the Rectory. This lapse, as he quickly realized, was not compromising. There was nothing inside the rucksack connected with himself, and nothing of interest—unless that word could be justly applied to the *New Poems* of Alistair Shiel. He could imagine the shocked bewilderment of the two old men when they read them. This was the first laughable feature he had been able to extract from a distressing episode.

Not that he felt much like laughing even now. His left leg was beginning to stiffen. Turning up the trouser, he found it black from the fold of the knee to the ankle, and so swollen that he could hardly bend it. Much as he disliked the idea of another mountain adventure, he had determined, at the first opportunity, to make for the moors. Now he knew that climbing, or even rough walking, would be impossible: it was as much as he could do to keep going on a level road. His best plan, he decided, would be to try to scrounge a lift from a passing lorry or motor-car, to start 'hitch-hiking,' as they called it. So far, he had felt like congratulating

himself that, on this obscure road, there was little chance of encountering a living soul, much less a motor-car. Now he would have thanked his stars for the sight of one.

During this exciting afternoon the hours had slipped by insensibly; the sun was already declining. By this time his bruised leg had become so stiff and painful that, in spite of the meagre distance he had covered, he felt he would have to give in. He sat down on the roadside and looked at his watch. It had stopped. Perhaps he had forgotten to wind it—he couldn't remember—but by the height of the sun he judged it must be at least five o'clock. In another hour or so, he reflected, the cricket match would be over, and some knowing yokel would have managed to make the car start. Even more probably, the parson would have called out the shirt-sleeved constable.

He pulled himself painfully to his feet and limped on for a mile or so. Now the road was beginning to climb, and each lift of his leg made him wince.

"When I get to the top of this hill," he consoled himself, "I shall look for a drink of water and settle down for the night in the bracken somewhere. By to-morrow the swelling may have gone down a bit."

FRANCIS BRETT YOUNG,
Mr Lucton's Freedom

EXERCISES IN COMPREHENSION, APPRECIATION, AND COMPOSITION

I. DUEL IN THE MOUNTAINS

1. John Buchan gives life to his narrative by using technical terms; you feel that he is actually there, climbing the heights with these men. He speaks of a *chimney*, the *lower pitches*, *overhang*, and a *traverse*. In addition, he makes use of some technical terms which are used also by sailors. Find these terms in a dictionary and say what they mean.

2. Explain by any means you choose what is meant by a *cleft*, a *fissure*, and *scree*. Imagine that the person to whom you are giving your explanations is unfamiliar with mountainous country.

3. How would you distinguish a *nose* of rock from a *gendarme* of rock? The words are used not in a literal but in a figurative sense, but in what way are they appropriate here?

Couloir and *corrie* are words used to name parts of a mountainous district. What do they mean?

4. John Buchan gives colour and emphasis to his writing. He speaks of Hannay's *cold* fury. The Mackray tops, he tells us, are like *dull* amethysts. The route back looks *starkly* impossible. He works *with a maniac's fury*. The rope is *rating* on the sharp brink beyond the chimney. The calm which comes over the scene is a *desperate choking* calm.

Find other examples of this vividness of expression.

5. Which parts of the narrative do you find to be the most exciting? Give reasons for your choice.

6. What have you learnt about the character of Richard Hannay?

7. Would you say that the above account is fact or fiction? Perhaps you will be able to develop an argument

in favour of either opinion, but be sure to support your opinion with reasons.

8. Suggest some reasons why John Buchan asks a series of questions in the fourth paragraph. Where else does he use this device, and for what purposes?

9. Notice that the story is not unfolded merely as narrative. We are permitted to hear Hannay speak, just as we are taken right into his very mind to see what problems his brain had to contend with.

Consider the words Hannay uttered aloud. Do you think them appropriate to a man in these circumstances? Why (or why not)?

10. Notice how John Buchan makes skilful use of his paragraphs. Instead of packing too much into a paragraph, he builds up his account by concentrating on a particular aspect of his story.

Thus, in the second paragraph, he wishes to give a vivid impression of Hannay's serious injury. He begins with the words *horrid mess*.

What other similar expressions does he use in this paragraph, and what is the total effect?

Find other examples from the passage where he gives added strength and vividness to his story.

2. THE WOODEN HORSE

1. In what way was this stratagem particularly clever?

2. Eric Williams uses some technical terms—*e.g.*, *shoring* and *datum mark*. Explain the action and purpose of *shoring*.

Without using a dictionary or encyclopædia, say what you think is the meaning of *datum mark*.

3. Explain the exact difference between *digging* and *excavating*.

4. What technical difficulties did the tunnellers have to overcome? How did they overcome them?

5. On several occasions Eric Williams makes use of slang. How far do you consider him to be justified in doing so?

6. Express some of the slangy expressions in more correct English. What change would this make in the telling of the story?

7. The paragraphs are quite short. One consists of a single short sentence. Try the effect of combining five or six of these short paragraphs into one longer and fuller paragraph.

Comment on the effect of the change you have made.

8. In what important respects does this story differ from that of the Wooden Horse of Troy?

9. After escaping from the prison camps Nigel and John manage to reach freedom. Describe in your own words their actual escape through the tunnel.

3. ESCAPE INTO SPAIN

1. From where do you think Brigadier Hargest obtained the pass, and how was the signature of a high-ranking German officer obtained?

2. The Brigadier had a packed lunch consisting mainly of bread and wine. Why did they not give him a Thermos flask of tea?

3. What evidence is there of the attitude of the French to the Germans at this period?

4. What is meant by the *black market*? What circumstances in the story encouraged the development of a black market?

5. Patriotism was prominent among the motives that induced Brigadier Hargest to escape from the prison camp in Italy. What other examples of patriotism do you find in the story?

6. There is a saying that "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel." What do you think this saying means?

7. From your answers to Questions 5 and 6 discuss what patriotism really means, and what Nurse Edith Cavell meant when she said, "Patriotism is not enough."

8. Notice that Brigadier Hargest does not relate a plain narrative and nothing else. He pauses to look at the scenery and to pass on the impressions he received from it.

Which parts of the scenery did he find most attractive?

9. He also introduces dialogue. Which characters do you hear speaking, and what is the effect of your being permitted to hear their actual words, just as they were spoken, instead of having them in reported speech?

10. Write a short composition on *The Joy of Freedom*. You may treat the subject in whatever way you wish.

4. AN ARAB BANQUET

1. From this narrative you receive a very different impression of the Arabs from the one obtained in reading P. C. Wren's *Beau Geste*. Give some reasons for this difference of attitude.

2. In what ways is Arab etiquette (a) similar to, (b) different from our own?

3. In what ways do their methods of cooking differ from ours?

4. Do you (or do you not) like the idea of communal feeding? Remember that when you have a meal in a restaurant it is hardly the same kind of communal feeding as described by T. E. Lawrence. Give reasons for your attitude to feeding in this way.

5. From the story, what do you learn about Arab dress?

6. In the last paragraph but one the word *nice* is used in the sense of 'particular' or 'discriminating.' In what ways was Lawrence 'nice' during the banquet? On what occasion did he earn disapproval?

7. The paragraphs are approximately of the same length. Suggest some reasons for this.

8. In what respects does the way in which this narrative is given differ from the two previous passages?

9. If you had not been told that T. E. Lawrence was relating facts and P. C. Wren was writing fiction, how might you have discovered that this was so?

10. Narrate as interestingly as you can the story of a meal (or banquet) you once had in the company of a large number of people. Choose your central incident and build up your account so as to lead up to it, so that it will have the greatest prominence or emphasis.

5. PURSUIT BY NIGHT

1. What precautions did David take to safeguard the jewels?

2. Why do you (or do you not) feel inclined to continue reading the story from the point where the extract leaves off?

3. What does the story tell you about South African animals and their habits?

4. In what ways do the features of this countryside differ from ours?

5. What advantages did David have? What risks and dangers did he have to face?

6. John Buchan introduces a number of Afrikaans words in this book. Why does he do this? Do they annoy you or do they make the story more interesting? If so, in what way?

7. On what occasions did David have to rely on his observation and judgment?

8. What do you learn of the kinds of books John Buchan had read? (If you read about him in *Who Was Who*, remembering that he died in 1940, you will also get a good idea where and why he read them.)

9. Write a descriptive passage in which you trace the changes of colour as dawn comes into the sky.

10. Write a descriptive composition about a starry night.

6. CASUALTIES AMONG THE CAMELS

1. Notice the vivid way in which Peter Fleming makes use of imagery:

(a) June opened *with a villain's smile*.

(b) The snow *plastering* his inexpressive face.

(c) A *dead, ravaged* star wheeling in the cold *gulf* of space.

(d) . . . the *quilted* tree-tops of a world below a down.

In each of the above examples Peter Fleming has transferred from its usual context a word or expression which now becomes strikingly vivid in its new association.

Thus we are familiar with the villain's crafty smile in melodrama. June is usually a pleasant month during which we say that the sun smiles on us. The notion of a villain's smile is that this particular June wore a cruel, cunning smile, for she well knew the desperately bad weather conditions awaiting the travellers.

In the same way, work out the idea of transference in (b), (c), and (d).

2. Comment on the picturesque in these expressions:

(a) a miniature *pageant* of despair.

(b) the *iron floor* of the valley.

3. He uses his descriptive words with great skill. What do the following words mean, and with which nouns are they used?

cerulean, redundant, lowering, resigned, banal, rapacious, imperious, inclement, dun, facetious, exiguous.

4. Find from a classical dictionary the kind of task performed by Sisyphus.

What is meant by a *Sisyphean advance*?

Comment on the appropriateness of the expression *a Sisyphæan advance* as used in this context.

5. Explain the geographical terms:

shingle, pass, shoulder, pinnacle, plateau, gulf, gully, col, tableland, altitude, bluff.

6. The writer makes effective and sometimes humorous use of the hyphen:

(a) The pleasure was short-lived.

(b) The camels began to drag on their head-ropes.

(c) The camel's wool was coming off in expectation of a summer non-existent up here.

(d) Camels . . . thrown away as if they had been half-smoked cigarettes.

(e) The dusk was none of those things but hard and drab and what's-the-use.

(f) Our grin-and-bear-it grumbling had become the flimsiest of façades.

(g) Young men in deserts do dwell on sentimentalized, given-away-with-the-Christmas-number pictures of their native land.

From the above examples, say what you have noticed about the different uses of the hyphen. For instance, which of the above word-groupings seem natural and inevitable and which are forced, even though the effect may be pleasing?

(Some fifty years ago printers put *now-a-days* and *never-the-less*, whereas to-day you never see them hyphenated.)

Which words in the passage do you consider might well have been printed either as one word or with a hyphen?

7. From example 6 (g) above you will notice that Peter Fleming's experience is that the thoughts of travellers in remote countries frequently return to their own land. Why does he use the word *sentimental* to express their thoughts?

8. Express more simply:

(a) For hours I had been marshalling my exiguous vocabulary into a denunciation of their conduct.

(b) Their knowledge that I was unacquainted with their language had never yet curbed their volubility.

(c) I did not feel equal to coping with twenty minutes of expostulation.

(d) I wished to convey a bald and rudimentary rebuke.

(e) The cogency of my rebuke was unlikely to be felt.

Since some of Peter Fleming's sentences are capable of being expressed more simply, give some reasons why he did not write in this simple form.

9. Give some examples where Peter Fleming's thoughts return to everyday life in his own country, England.

10. At what points in the story is your sympathy for the animals most keenly felt?

11. Trace the changes of Peter Fleming's feelings during this journey in mountainous country.

7. THE TIGER SMILED

1. Explain the meanings of the following geographical terms:

ravine and *depression*.

2. In what ways would you distinguish the following from one another:

ravine, gorge, valley, depression, dell, and gulch?

3. What is a *glissade*? What does it mean "to glissade down a slide?"

4. Like Peter Fleming, Jim Corbett uses homely illustrations:

I can best describe the rock as a *giant school slate*.

From the story find some other examples.

5. What is the usual meaning of the word *clutch*? When you are speaking of eggs, what does a clutch mean?

6. Define as accurately as you can the following words:

receptacle, muzzle, stock, detour.

Which of these words has more than one meaning?

7. What do the following descriptive words mean:
deep-throated, paralysed, exaggerated, tangible, imperative, mottled.

With which other words did the writer use them?

8. What does it mean if you do something
involuntarily, instinctively, or perceptibly?
9. What is the meaning of the picturesque expression,
cut the threads of her own life?
10. This writer uses the dash fairly often:

(a) Not a satisfactory reason, unless one assumes—without any reason—that she had selected me for her dinner.

(b) The rock stood up—not quite perpendicularly—on one of its long sides.

(c) As I stepped clear of this giant slate I looked behind me over my right shoulder and—looked straight into the tigress's face.

(d) Only a little further now for the muzzle to go, and the tigress—who had not once taken her eyes off mine—was still looking up at me, with the pleased expression still on her face.

(e) The shears that had assisted her to cut the threads of sixty-four human lives—the people of the district put the number at twice the figure—had, while the game was in her hands, turned, and cut the thread of her own life.

(f) For three long periods, extending over a whole year, I had tried—and tried hard—to get a shot at the tigress, and had failed.

In which of the above examples is the dash used for putting ideas as it were in brackets? What kind of information is put into these brackets or 'parentheses'?

Where does Corbett use dashes for the purpose of emphasis?

In which sentence does he use the dash for dramatic effect? Exactly what kind of dramatic effect is he seeking?

Where would commas, used in pairs, have done just as well as the dashes? Why?

By what other methods, besides using pairs of commas and pairs of dashes, does he indicate a parenthesis?

11. Towards the end of the passage he summarizes certain disadvantages which proved to be substantial advantages.

How far do you agree that such a summary is desirable?

12. *Matter for Discussion:*

(a) Superstitions. (What example is there in the story?)

(b) Nightmares. (Their possible causes and their being so readily forgotten.)

(c) Close shaves. (Why are they remembered for long afterwards?)

(d) Reaction after danger. (Possible causes of the feeling of being bereft of all energy.)

(e) The attractiveness of the unknown hereafter. (Valhalla and the Happy Hunting Grounds.)

8. AMONG THE HEAD-HUNTERS

1. Comment on the way in which this passage opens.

2. A feature of this passage is the alternating of very short paragraphs with longer, more substantial ones. There is no regularity about this, of course, but you should be able to give some reason why there is this great variation in the length of consecutive paragraphs.

3. Examine some of the short paragraphs. Suggest reasons why the writer kept them to this length.

4. Find out what you can about the Dyaks and their customs. Mention some of their racial characteristics.

5. Make a drawing of what you think a Dyak long-house looks like. It is a community dwelling. Why is it lifted so far above the ground?

6. In what ways do these people grow food, hunt, and provide home comforts?

7. Describe how European ideas of beauty differ strikingly from those of the Dyaks.

8. The word *Tuan* is used by the natives of Southern Asia with almost the same meaning as the South African native gives to Baas (Boss). Tuans are regarded as people of importance. Notice, too, that Resident is spelt with a capital letter. Why?

9. Halliburton is polite to his hosts. He is deliberately understating when he says, "Our long-house was not a model of sanitation."

Such understating is also a British characteristic.

If you can, give some further examples and find the name of this particular figure of speech. It is curious that this understating may become quite an effective way of exaggerating.

10. What expressions used by the author would lead you to believe that he was an American?

11. What evidence is there that Koh was both vengeful and superstitious?

12. Some of the humour in this story is grim, especially where he is explaining, through the interpreter, some of the characteristics of the 'magic bird.' Give some examples of this grim humour.

13. Write a short story entitled *The Fake*. If you wish, you may base your ideas on the opening paragraphs of this extract from *The Flying Carpet*.

14. Continue the story by writing an account of the first flight taken by these chieftains of Borneo.

15. Describe in your own words a glider to somebody who has never seen any aircraft.

9. ESCAPE FROM FAMINE

1. Notice the simplicity of the writer's vocabulary. It is suitable for a tale of peasant folk. A number of the sentences begin with *And* or *But*, perhaps because this is suggestive of

o

the slow thoughts of peasants who think out one idea at a time, then pause before adding an additional thought, which, to them, is of such weight as to need an additional sentence.

Find examples to illustrate both these ideas.

2. The dialect of the southern Chinese sounded brittle and sharp to Wang Lung. What kind of sound is a brittle sound?

Would you agree with the idea that people should always aim at standard speech and should try to get rid of all trace of dialect? Give reasons for your opinion.

3. Why did the simple Chinese folk call a railway engine a "fire-wagon"?

4. Note the pleasing grace of some of the expressions:

(a) their small feet fitting neatly to the stones.

(b) and sleep overcame them with fullness.

In what ways may these expressions be considered picturesque?

5. Comment on the writer's way of unfolding his story, and in particular consider his use of dialogue interspersed with descriptive matter.

6. The author makes use of some interesting comparisons:

hanging lips like a camel's mouth,

clung like fleas to a dog's back,

as big as a small pond.

Comment on the appropriateness of these expressions. In particular, explain how they add vividness to your understanding what is being described.

7. Pearl Buck gives some picturesquely simple detail. For instance, Wang Lung was astonished to see the land whirl by as he peeped through the 'holes in the side of the wagon.' Find some other instances of his simplicity of character.

8. "Give me begging!" How far do you agree that this was sound advice in these circumstances?

9. What particular features of the people's lives make you feel (a) attracted by them, (b) sympathetic towards them?

10. What evidence does the passage give about Wang Lung's frugality?

11. O-lan was Wang Lung's wife. Formerly she had been a slave. What contribution did she make to her family's comfort?

12. From the passage what do you learn of these different aspects of life in China?

means of transport; means of trading; arts and crafts; communal feeding; charity.

10. SIX MEN, ONE RAFT—AND SHARKS!

1. The author is accurate in his choice of words. In what connexions does he speak of voracity, indentation, and humiliation?

He uses the descriptive words *crestfallen* and *spiritless*. To what does he apply these words? What meaning is he conveying by doing so?

In what connexion does he use the phrases *unspeakably foolish*, *involuntary swim*, and *blind frenzy*?

2. What kind of movement is expressed by *scurrying*? What is the meaning of *inimical*? Explain the appropriateness of the phrases *cold-blooded appendage* and *bubbling over with humour*.

3. Explain the exact differences in the meanings of the following words:

quiet, *crestfallen*, *apathetic*, *paralysed*.

4. What fish are named in the story? What kinds of bait attract them? Why do men try to catch these fish in particular?

5. From your own observation mention some of the peculiarities of talking birds. Why did these men regret the loss of their parrot?

6. For what different purposes does man use the skin of animals? Give examples. For what purposes is the plumage of birds used by man?

7. "Familiarity breeds contempt." This expression is so concise and true that it has become a proverb. Explain its meaning. How far do you consider it to be always true?

8. In the same way, examine the truth of the proverbs "Look before you leap"; "He who hesitates is lost"; "Nothing venture, nothing gain"; "Take the bull by the horns."

9. Write an account of a narrow escape you once had.

10. Suggest some reasons why (a) people in general keep diaries, and (b) these men in particular kept one.

11. For what reasons do seafarers dread sharks?

12. Why is pulling animals' tails regarded as an inferior form of sport?

11. THE LAST MARCH

1. For what different purposes did Captain Scott keep a diary during his expedition?

2. What difficulties (a) foreseen, (b) unforeseen, were experienced by the Polar party on their last march?

3. What are *cairns*? Why had cairns been set up along their route?

4. What is there to show the great loyalty that these men had for one another?

5. On several occasions Captain Scott refers to Providence. What is his attitude to Providence?

6. Which appear to you to be the greatest moments in this story of human endurance? Give reasons for your answers.

12. THE HUMAN GUN-CARRIAGE

1. The story of Gaspar Ruiz is told by a general whom he has captured. How does the punctuation indicate that it is somebody relating his actual experiences?

2. What impressions have you formed of the man who is telling the story? Give reasons for your answer.

3. What have you learnt of the character, skill, and aims of Gaspar Ruiz?

4. Notice that at the beginning of this passage the paragraphs are long. This is for the purpose of narrating the story. Why are the three opening paragraphs followed by a sequence of short ones?

5. When later in the passage Conrad again uses longer paragraphs, for what purposes does he do so?

6. Show how Conrad leads up skilfully to the tragic climax of this story. What good qualities of Gaspar Ruiz are revealed at the end of the narrative?

7. What purposes are served by revealing these good qualities at that particular stage of the story?

8. What is there in the story to justify the term *lamentable* when applied to the history of the world? How far do you agree with this point of view?

9. What tactics were used by (a) the defenders, (b) the attackers of the fort?

10. Read once again the paragraph beginning "Suddenly he jumped up . . ." (p. 123). Show how Conrad uses sentence structure to bring out the fact that Gaspar Ruiz was seriously perturbed.

11. *Those were bizarre words* (p. 123). What is the usual meaning of *bizarre*, and in what different sense is Conrad using this adjective here?

12. What does the passage tell you about the Indians? Which parts of Conrad's description of them strike you as being most vivid?

13. Explain as accurately as you can the meanings of these geographical terms:

foothills (p. 123), *gorge* (p. 127), *ridge* (p. 126), *basalt* (p. 123), *buttressing rock* (p. 123), a *cornice* road (p. 123), and *crevice* (p. 124).

14. Use simpler words in place of the word in italics,

but do not alter the meaning more than you can help:

(a) Carreras would have made use of Gaspar Ruiz for his *nefarious* designs.

(b) Carreras decided it would answer his purpose better to *propitiate* the Chilian Government.

(c) Between Gaspar Ruiz and the rest of *incensed* mankind there could be no communication, according to the customs of honourable warfare.

(d) Torn and faded as they were, the *vestiges* of my uniform were recognized.

(e) Their hoarse voices made a vast, *inarticulate* sound, like the murmur of the sea.

(f) Gaspar Ruiz had a *genius* for *guerilla* warfare.

(g) The garrison did not answer the *desultory* fire directed at the loopholes.

15. Notice sentence (e) above, and also the sentence *My horse lay still as if struck by lightning*.

In what ways does the illustration make the meaning more vivid? Find some other examples where Conrad uses similar illustrations (whether metaphors or similes). Examine the value of each example you find.

13. GREEN HELL

1. Notice Julian Duguid's effective use of imagery:

(a) His long legs rose *like a gigantic peak* out of the *plain* of his body.

(b) . . . a slow *musketry* of snores.

(c) . . . splashing *like a deer through marshland*.

(d) Deep pools gleamed *like crystals on a background of green lacquer*.

Notice that sometimes he sees some vivid likeness between what he is describing and some action or appearance which, apart from the irresistible resemblance seized on, is really quite different.

In (a), where he speaks of the *plain* of Bee-Mason's body and in (b), where he speaks of a *musketry* of snores, he is not so much making a comparison as transferring an idea from its usual surroundings to quite a different one. Thus there is almost no resemblance between a plain and a human body, but the idea of the relation between a lofty peak towering over a plain has been transferred to this particular body. So, too, in order to convey the impression of rattling repetition of sound, the notion of musketry is transferred to Bee-Mason's snores.

Look up the terms metaphor and simile in *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* and say which of these figures of speech is used in (a), (b), (c), and (d) on page 214.

2. Give the meanings of these descriptive words, and say with which other words they were used for adding to their effect:

shimmering, pungent, destitute, undulating, desecrated, supercilious, implacable.

3. Explain carefully the difference between:

to constrict and *to contort*, *distended* and *extended*, and *a fanatic* and *a monomaniac*.

4. Explain why this wood was so destitute of shade.

5. What humorous remarks does Julian Duguid make about his friend's monomania?

6. For what reason may contempt be said to be *biting*?

7. What was it that turned Bee-Mason into a fanatic?

8. Why do you (or do you not) consider photography to be an art?

9. In what ways was the anaconda (a) beautiful, (b) deadly?

10. What are the anaconda's means of attack?

11. What was both humorous and unnecessary in the advice Bee-Mason gave while the photograph was being taken?

12. The *Conquistadors* were the Spanish and Portuguese who made a *conquest* of Central and South America over

four centuries ago. In what ways does a map of this region confirm this statement?

What other historical reference is there in this passage?

14. A DESPERATE RACE

1. Comment on the appropriateness of the metaphors:
 - (a) filling up the chasms of life with mirth and laughter.
 - (b) he took a big swath in the evening's entertainment.
2. What induced Mr — to tell the story of *A Desperate Race*?
3. Which parts of the story did the audience find difficult to believe?
4. Why, if they found this story incredible, did they allow him to continue to the end?
5. Sometimes the narrator indulges in slang; on the other hand, he sometimes uses expressions with so literary a flavour that they are hardly in keeping with his story.
Give examples of both kinds of expressions and put them into more acceptable English.
6. If you were to substitute the expressions you have written in answering Question 5 instead of those used by the author, would the way of telling the story be improved?
7. What evidence is there that the period of the story was neither the present day nor even fifty years ago?
8. Some of the paragraphs end in inverted commas and others do not, even though the story is being told. Why is this?
9. For what purpose, other than indicating direct speech, does this writer use double quotation marks?
10. He sometimes uses single quotation marks. For what purpose does he do so?

15. SHOOTING THE RAPIDS

1. Notice these examples of word-formation:

ground (used as a name)

to ground (used to express an action)

grounding (a word of both description and action)

aground (a word expressive of both manner and place)

2. In one place Harold Bindloss makes his picture impressive by a sequence of three descriptive words:

The landscape was *monotonous, sombre, and forbidding*. To make them even more impressive he concludes a paragraph with them. In the same paragraph he achieves emphasis by changing the normal order of the words. Give examples of this.

3. The passage about shooting the rapids has some excellent examples of the effective use of participles as descriptive words. Participles express both action and description:

streaking the angry waters with a silver track

swirling along the stony beach in lines of foam

a *shimmering* haze of spray

a *meaning* look

the *daunting* thing was that Driscoll looked afraid

the *gleaming* spray-cloud got rapidly nearer

the *wavering* mist

The above are all Present Participles.

His gaze was *fixed* and *horrified*

There was ground for being *daunted*

Steve is badly *rattled*

swollen by *melted* *half-swamped* snow

a *fan-shaped* rock

The above are Past Participles. Which of them give more of description than of action?

4. By any means you choose, explain exactly what is done in making these movements:

to lurch, to plunge, to swerve, to brace oneself, to swirl, to head a canoe, to make head against a current.

5. Comment on the effectiveness of *boiled* in the sentence:
The current boiled in fierce rebound.
6. Arrange these words in order of increasing intensity, and explain their different meanings:
turmoil, upheaval, eddy.
7. What is the difference between spray and foam?
8. Give the meanings of the geographical terms:
shoal, current, reef, the rapids, crest, a belt of forest.
9. Discuss whether the words in italics are necessary or not:
(a) *revolving* eddies, (b) the savage *austerity* of the wilderness.
10. Explain how fear (or alarm) may become *contagious*.
11. At one point in the passage we read of men with steady nerves; later we are informed that Thirwell's nerves *tingle*. Trace the course of Thirwell's emotions as this story is unfolded.
12. Think of as many differences as you can between paddling a canoe and rowing a boat.
13. Describe, to a friend who has not seen it, a waterfall which has impressed you with its magnificence or its beauty.
14. Relate the story of a canoe which was caught in an eddying current, swept over a weir, and overturned.

16. THE GRIM, GALLANT STORY OF COMOCK THE ESKIMO

1. Draw a picture of a typical Eskimo outside his home. Pay particular attention to his clothing.
2. What equipment do Eskimos need in order to make life endurable in those regions?
3. What living creatures, other than human, are seen in those Arctic wastes?

4. Comment on the wife's method of making a calendar.
5. What contrasts are there between summer and winter in the land of the Eskimos?
6. Compare the descriptive matter in this passage with that from Scott's diary. What do you notice?
7. What precautions against danger were taken by these Eskimos?
8. What do you think is meant by *young* ice? What precautions were taken in crossing it? Why were these precautions necessary?
9. The ice is said to *growl*, and the snow to *smoke*. Why are these words used in particular?
10. "For a long time we could not sleep because the land was so still." Explain why the silence would not let them sleep.
11. Why did Comock have to *club* his way against the dogs?
12. In what ways does the story reveal Comock's character?

13. Read this paragraph:

We started and came to a ledge jutting off from the cliff face upon which we landed where, having climbed up some fifty feet, we sat down until as I was looking through my glass at thousands of sea pigeons flying among the rocks of a near-by island, I suddenly saw a small boat which, sprawling clumsily over a lumpy sea, was rowing toward us.

(a) What is your opinion of this combining into a single sentence-paragraph the matter of the whole of the second paragraph of the story?

(b) Which parts of the sentence-paragraph are clumsily expressed?

(c) Why did the author take six separate sentences to express his ideas?

(d) Without trying to make only one sentence, combine some of the author's short sentences into

more substantial ones. Vary your methods of welding them together, then compare your work with the author's and with the version given at the beginning of this question. What do you notice?

14. What is the effect of interposing little pieces of conversation into this story?

15. In what ways is this story (a) grim, (b) gallant?

16. The story leaves off just before its most exciting and tragic moment. The full story was broadcast by the B.B.C.

17. MAN-HUNT

1. Find on a large-scale map the area in which the chase took place. What geographical features in it help a hunted man?

2. Explain the meanings of the geographical terms *watershed*, *head of the valley*, *glade*, and *headland*.

3. Geoffrey Household has some interesting phrases:
crashed into the undergrowth, to break cover, to give a holla, a dominating shadow, to lay a false scent, to draw him off, to jump a lorry, a ride of turf, and to lay a drag.

Many of these are hunting terms. Explain what they mean. *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* will help you.

4. He makes use of a number of colloquial expressions:
yelling blue murder; he wouldn't be able to give me any more cinder-track stuff; this lot of police; infernally tired.

Use more exact English to express the same ideas. Why were these slangy expressions used at all?

5. Near stables you may often find a raised slab of brick or stone, sometimes with steps leading up to it. This is to enable a rider to mount. Think of some other similar expressions where the word ending in *-ing* does not describe the word with which it is used but indicates a purpose.

Thus a *mounting-block* is not a block which mounts, but a block for the purpose of mounting.

6. What reasons have you for thinking that this fugitive was a good hunter and experienced in fieldcraft?

7. Do you (or do you not) agree that Geoffrey Household makes his story more interesting by stopping to give reasons for his stratagems? Illustrate your answer by quoting from the story.

8. The story is told as if the writer is looking back into the distant past. He suggests that he has now become sluggish or even immobile. How are these ideas brought out in the passage?

9. "I hadn't any luck in minor matters." Which events in the story show this to be true?

10. Notice the irony in the idea that what his quick wits had regarded as ingenious, the more methodically minded police had already thought of. What was it that both he and the police had thought of?

11. "There are always a few wars going on and either side will be glad to let him indulge his pleasure and get some healthy exercise at the same time."

This speech is satirical—that is, it is full of mockery. He is satirizing soldiers of fortune, a vanishing race in the world of to-day. Which words in the above sentence are hardly to be taken literally?

12. He is also satirizing police methods. "My theft had put me into the proper gangster pigeon hole." The idea is that, as he is no gangster, the police system of filing his records will mislead them.

What arguments can you think of, for and against, this pigeon-holing of police records?

13. "It cheers me to see the healthy insolence in all I did." On what other occasions does he speak insolently about the police, either as a body or individually? Where does he express some appreciation of their skill?

14. "Darkness is safety on condition that all one's enemies are human."

What does this sentence mean? How far do you consider it to be true?

15. Comment on the vividness of the simile:
dry valley bottoms . . . *like the sticks of a fan.*

Comment also on the metaphors:

- a *bowl* of woodland
and
great brogued boats *navigating* a green sea
and
my damp-proof *citadel* of luxury.

16. Artemis is another name for Diana, goddess of hunting. She is described in poetry as "Queen and huntress, chaste and fair."

The bloodthirsty maiden lady mentioned in the story is incongruously named Artemis. Apart from the epithet 'boat-footed,' what is humorous in likening the lady to the goddess?

17. Asmodeus, according to the Talmud, was the demon of vanity and dress. He is called "the king of the devils." In the Book of Tobit you may read how he was driven into Egypt by a charm made of the heart and liver of a fish burnt on perfumed ashes.

Why is the name Asmodeus a suitable one to give a wild cat?

18. During what time of year did this hunt take place? What evidence have you for your opinion?

19. Which moment do you consider (a) the most exciting, (b) the most grotesque, (c) the most amusing?

18. MISTAKEN IDENTITY

1. What is there (a) attractive, (b) pathetic in the rector's character?

2. Explain the appropriateness of the word *crystallized* when applied to the mind of this particular middle-aged man.

3. Notice the delightful irony of Mr Lucton's excusing himself *for showing a lack of interest in things that mattered*. What things are referred to? How is this ironical?

4. "I must look you up in Wisden." What is Wisden, and for what purpose would the vicar use it?

What kinds of information may be looked up in *Bradshaw*, *Kelly*, *Roget*, *Whitaker*, *Baedeker*, *Cruden*, and *Debrett*?

5. Notice the vocabulary of uneasiness used when Mr Lucton is going out to bat:

his approaching discomfiture; the intervening space horrible in its emptiness; hands clammy with sweat; the bat seemed leaden and badly balanced; with a fluttering pulse and a feeling of giddiness.

Build up a paragraph about the feelings of your favourite opening batsman, eagerly looking forward to making a big score as he walks to the wicket. Choose a number of words and expressions to emphasize your central idea of confidence and pleasant anticipation.

6. Humour often manifests itself in contrast. If you saw a man in a top-hat, morning-coat, cravat, lavender waist-coat, and striped trousers—but wearing white canvas shoes—you could not resist laughing at the absurd contrast.

Which are the most humorous moments in the story? Show how sometimes the humorous situation achieves some of its effect by contrast.

7. *Macramé* means a fringe or trimming of knotted cord or thread. *Chenille* is a velvety cord with silk fibres; it is often wound round a core of wire. Such adornments, with frequent scrolls and tassels, shone everywhere in Victorian drawing-rooms.

Write two paragraphs, in the first of which you describe a large Victorian drawing-room, and give details of its excessive, massive, and elaborate furniture. In your second paragraph describe as its contrast a typical modern drawing-room.

If you wish, you may write about the same room, now

inhabited by a family who use it as the main living-room of a flat.

8. In what ways and among what people may indolence, which is usually regarded as a vice, be considered virtuous?

9. Notice the naturalness of the dialogue. The vicar speaks hastily, or perhaps indolently, for he often omits the subject of his sentences: "Had a look at *The Times*? . . . Wants a couple of openin' bats to stiffen it. . . . Never buy any books now. . . . Frightens the life out of 'em. . . ."

Suggest some reasons, consistent with his character and the thoughts uppermost in his mind at the time, to account for this apparent carelessness of speech.

10. What is the meaning of *patina*? How is this word applicable to the room used by the vicar as a study? The alliteration of *patina*, *prolonged*, and *peaceful* is doubtless intentional. What effect does it produce?

11. Comment on the appropriateness of the similes:

(a) festoons of lines hung out *like lianas in a tropical forest*

(b) excessively long arms, *like an anthropoid ape's*

(c) flung himself through the air *like a high-speed projectile*

12. Write a short composition on *A Mistaken Identity*. Imagine that you are returning home from a fancy-dress ball and an eccentric elderly gentleman has insisted on giving you the respect due to the character in whose dress you are masquerading. Lead your story up to a climax.

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